Supplication

In the Eyes of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a)

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The Ahl al-Bayt (a) World Assembly

بسم الله الرحمن الرحیم

(Supplication In the Eyes of the Ahl al-Bayt (as

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point

This text begins introducing the Definition of Prayer, and its importance. The author explains how prayers are accepted, and what acceptance of prayer can lead to in a believer's life. Beyond the literal recitation of the prayer, in this text we can find the .etiquettes of prayer, and other aspects we must take into consideration

Preface

In the Name of Allah, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful

The precious legacy left behind by the Holy Prophet's Household {ahl al-bayt} (may peace be upon them all) and their followers' preservation of this legacy from the menace of extinction is a perfect example of an all-encompassing school {maktab}, which embraces the different branches of Islamic knowledge. This school has been able to train many talented personalities by quenching them with this gushing .fountain

This school has presented scholars to the Muslim ummah who, by following the Holy Prophet's Household ('a), have occupied the station of clarifying doubts and skepticisms brought forth by various creeds and intellectual currents both inside and

outside Muslim society. Throughout the past centuries, they have presented the .firmest answers and solutions to these doubts

Anchored in the responsibilities it is shouldering, the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) World Assembly has embarked upon defending the sanctity of risalah {messenger ship} and its authentic beliefs—truths which have always

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been opposed by the chiefs and leaders of anti-Islamic sects, religions and trends. In this sacred path, the Assembly regards itself as a follower of the upright pupils of the school of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a)—those who have always been ready to refute those accusations and calumnies and have tried to be always in the frontline of this struggle .on the basis of the expediencies of time and space

The experiences in this field, which have been preserved in the books of scholars belonging to the school of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), are unique in their own right. It is because these experiences have been based upon knowledge {'ilm} and the preeminence of the intellect and reasoning, and at the same time, they are completely devoid of blind prejudice, whim and caprice. These experiences address experts, scholars and thinkers in a manner that is acceptable to a healthy mind and .{the pure human natural disposition {fitrah

In a bid to assist those who are in quest of truth, the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) World Assembly has endeavored to enter a new phase of these worthy experiences within the framework of research and translating the works of contemporary Shi'ah writers or .those who, through divine guidance, have embraced this noble school

The Assembly is also engaged in the study and publication of the valuable works of pious predecessors and outstanding Shi'ah personalities so that those who are thirsty for the truth could quench their thirst from this refreshing fountain by listening and embracing this

.truth, which the Holy Prophet's Household ('a) has offered as a gift to the entire world

It is hoped that our dear readers would not deprive the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) World Assembly of their valuable opinions, suggestions and constructive criticisms in this .arena

We also invite scholars, translators and other institutions to assist us in propagating .the pure Muhammadan (S) Islam

We ask God, the Exalted, to accept this trivial effort and enhance it further under the auspices of His vicegerent on earth, Hadrat al-Mahdi (may Allah, the Exalted, expedite .(his glorious advent

It is appropriate here to express our utmost gratitude to ash-Shaykh Muhammad Mahdi al-Asifi for writing the book, and to Br. Jabir Chandoo for translating it, as well as to all our honorable colleagues in accomplishing this task especially the dear ones .in the Translation Office for undertaking this responsibility

Cultural Affairs Department

Ahl al-Bayt ('a) World Assembly

Definition of Prayer

The Meaning of Prayer

point

Prayer (du'a') means the asking of a servant for his needs from Allah, the Exalted. On :analyzing this definition, we find that it can be reduced to the following four elements

.The One called upon (al-mad'uww), i.e. Allah, the Exalted .١

.The Supplicant (ud-Da'i), i.e. a human being .٢

.Prayer (ad-du'a'), i.e. the act of asking from Allah .٣

The Object of Prayer (al-maduww lahu), i.e. the need which one presents before .۴

.Allah by means of prayer

.The following is an explanation of each of the above four elements

(The One called upon (al–mad'uww .١

:The one called upon during prayer is Allah, the Exalted; the One who is

a. Absolutely Self-sufficient and

to whom belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth.

“Do you not know that to Allah belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth.”(۱)

“To Allah belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and whatever is between them. He creates whatever He wishes.”(۲)

b. Whose kingdom does not diminish by His bestowal.

“This is indeed Our provision, which will never be exhausted.”(۳)

“To these and to those- to all We extend the bounty of your Lord. All do We help, these as well as those, out of the bounty of your Lord, and the bounty of your Lord is not confined.”(۴)

A phrase in the supplication of al-iftitah reads, “And the frequency of giving increases Him not but in generosity and kindness.”

c. In whose divinity there is no stinginess. He is not miser in answering the needs of His servants.

Therefore, there is no reason that He should not answer the prayer of His servants when they pray to Him regarding that which is of importance to them, be it great or small, as He {himself} has said,

“Call Me, I will answer you”(۵);

except if the response (istijabah) is not to the benefit of the supplicant, as he is not aware of what is beneficial to him in reality and what is not, whilst Allah is All-knowing.

With regard to this, a phrase in the supplication of al-iftitah reads:

“If there was a delay {in Your response}, I would blame You, due to my ignorance; while perhaps that

۱- Qur’an, ۲:۱۰۷.

۲- Qur’an, ۵:۱۷.

۳- Qur’an, ۳۸:۵۴.

۴- Qur’an, ۱۷:۲۰.

۵- Qur’an, ۴۰:۶۰.

which has {been} delayed is good for me, as You know the outcome of all affairs. I have not seen a more generous master, so patient with a wretched slave, than You ".are with me

(The Supplicant (ud–Da'i .۲

The supplicant is the servant who is needy (faqir) in all respects, even in his :awareness of being needy to Allah

O mankind! You are the ones who stand in need of Allah, and Allah –He is the All-" (sufficient, the All-laudable."(۱

(Allah is the All-sufficient, and you are all-needy."(۲..."

Nothing can elevate a person to Allah, the Exalted, better than his neediness (faqr) to .Him. 'Neediness to Allah' is among the stations (manazil) of the mercy of Allah

The more a person is aware of his neediness to Allah, the closer he is to His mercy. On the contrary, the more arrogant he becomes, not realizing his neediness and .dependency on Allah, the farther he shall be from His mercy

('The Act of Asking (ad–Du'a .۳

The more persistent a person is in his petition to Allah, the closer he shall be to His mercy. The climax of asking from Allah is when one is in need of Him desperately .(idtirar), such that he has no other choice but that Allah should answer his prayer

By idtirar we mean a state in which a person loses all other means of attaining his wish, and there remains for him only one choice; a choice whose affair lies solely in the hand of Allah and not in his hand. Subsequently, he turns to Allah, the Exalted, in

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۱- Qur'an, ۳۵:۱۵.

۲- Qur'an, ۴۷:۳۸.

desperation. It is in such a condition that a servant is the nearest of all things to Allah's :mercy

Is He not who answers {the call of} the distressed {person} when he invokes Him" (and removes his distress...?"(1

In fact, there is no separation (fasl) at all between the supplication of the distressed .and the response from Allah in removing his distress

This state of being in desperate need of Allah (idtirar) during supplication implies detachment (inqita') from all other than Allah, and turning to Him alone; otherwise the act of supplicating and asking from Allah would no longer be considered as stemming .from desperate need toward Him

However, prayer does not dispense with the need for effort and action, as the endeavour by the supplicant for attaining his wish does not dispense with prayer and .petition to Allah

(The Object of Prayer (al-mad'uww lahu .۴

The object of supplication is anything that a supplicant prays to his Lord for, of his needs and wishes. And there is absolutely no objection in that a supplicant should ask from Allah whatever he wants, however great it might be; as this does not render Allah incapable, nor does His kingdom diminish because of this, nor is there any .miserliness in His divinity

Similarly, it does not matter if he were to pray to Allah even for the smallest of his wishes, "even for the band of his shoes, the fodder of his cattle, and the salt of his .(bread", as it has appeared in a Divine Narration (hadith al-qudsi

For

.Qur'an, ۲۷:۶۲ -۱

Allah loves His servant to be constantly in contact with Him with respect to everything, small or big, of his needs, and that his small needs should not veil him from Allah due to their insignificance, nor should the enormity of his needs separate him from Allah. He, the Exalted, likes to see the hands of His servant stretched toward Him for every need, and his heart continuously in remembrance of Him, in every state, in ease and .in adversity

Beside this, there is nothing like prayer and need in interlocking a human being with .Allah

The Value of Prayer

:The Qur’an says

Your Lord has said, ‘Call Me, I will answer you. Indeed those who are disdainful of My“ (worship will enter hell in utter humility.”(١

Prayer implies the turning (iqbal) of a servant toward Allah. Turning toward Allah constitutes the essence (ruh) of worship (‘ibadah), whilst worshipping Allah is the goal .of the creation of mankind

These three points mentioned above reveal to us the value of prayer as well as its .reality. So let us start with the third point and work our way upward to the first one

The Qur’an is very clear in that worship (‘ibadah) is the aim behind the creation of the :human beings. He, the Exalted, says

(I did not create the jinn and the humans except that they may worship Me.”(٢“

This is precisely what the third point entails; a concept which is of utmost importance .in Islam

The value of worship lies in that it

۱- ۴۰:۶۰ ,Qur'an.

۲- ۵۱:۵۶ ,Qur'an.

ties and links the human being to Allah. It is due to this very reason that the intention of getting closer to Allah (qasd at-Taqarrub) is an essential element in the realization .of ‘ibadah, without which the action performed would not be considered as ‘ibadah

Hence, the reality of ‘ibadah is the journey toward Allah, turning to Him, aspiring His face, and seeking His pleasure. This is the second point which is, in fact, an illustration .of the first point

The first point implied that prayer is a state of turning toward Allah, as it is one of the most distinct instances of connection and link with Allah. Among the different acts of .’devotion (‘ibadah), there is no act which can take man closer to Allah than du’a

Sayf at-Tammar is narrated to have said, “I heard Abu ‘Abdillah as-Sadiq (‘a) saying, ‘I enjoin prayer (du’a’) upon you, for there is nothing which will get you closer to Allah (than du’a’.’”(١)

The greater one’s need (hajat), desperation (idtirar) and dependency (faqr) on Allah, the more profound is his state of turning (iqbal) toward Him. There is a proportional relation between one’s feeling of dependency and his being in need of Allah desperately, and one’s turning toward Allah; for need and desperation prompts one to take resort in Him. And the iqbal of a person toward Allah, the Exalted, would be according to the degree of his perception of his own neediness, as the opposite is also .correct

He, the Exalted, says in

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol.٩٣, pg.٢٩٣ -١

:this regard

(Indeed man becomes rebellious when he considers himself without need."(۱"

Indeed man rebels and turns away from Allah as much as he sees himself to be needless. On the contrary, he turns toward Allah as much as he perceives his indigence and need toward Him. The Qur'an is precise in its words, 'when he .'considers himself without need

In actual fact, no human being is needless of Allah, rather the whole of man's :existence is absolute neediness (faqr) to Allah

O mankind! You are the ones who stand in need of Allah, and Allah –He is the All-" (sufficient, All-laudable."(۲

Nevertheless, it seems to him that he has become needless, and it is the arrogance .(ghurur) of man that creates this impression in him

When it appears to him that he is needless, he becomes disregardful and turns aside and transgresses. But when distress touches him and he feels himself to be in need of .Allah, then he comes back and turns toward Him

In conclusion, the reality of prayer is 'turning toward Allah' (iqbal). Whoever wishes to call on Allah and implore Him, he must turn toward Him earnestly. And it is this state of .'turning' which constitutes the reality and essence of prayer and makes it valuable

Four Ways of Reaching Allah in the Qur'an

Supplication is among the most important ways ordained by Allah for His servants in .order for them to arrive at Him

.Apart from this, Allah, the Exalted, has stated in the Qur'an four ways of arrival at Him

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) is

۱- Qur’an, ۹۶:۶ ۷.

۲- Qur’an, ۳۵:۱۵.

reported to have said, “There are four things in favour of man, and not against him; faith (Iman) and thankfulness (shukr), for Allah, the Exalted, says: ‘Why should Allah punish you if you give thanks and be faithful?’(۱); seeking forgiveness (istighfar), as He, the Exalted, says: ‘But Allah will not punish them while you are in their midst, nor will Allah punish them while they plead for forgiveness’(۲); and prayer (du’a’), for He, the Exalted, says: ‘Say, ‘My Lord would not care for you were it not for your supplication?’(۳)”(۴)

Mu‘awiyah bin Wahab narrates from Abu ‘Abdillah as-Sadiq (‘a), “O Mu‘awiyah! Whosoever is given three {things} shall not be deprived of the {other} three. Whoever is given prayer (du’a’) shall {also} be given the response (ijabah). Whoever is endowed with thankfulness (shukr) shall {also} be endowed with enhancement (ziyadah). And whoever is granted reliance on Allah (tawakkul) shall {also} be granted sufficiency (kifayah), for Allah, the Exalted, says in His Book, ‘And whoever puts his trust in Allah, He will suffice him’(۵); and He says: ‘If you are grateful, I will surely enhance you {in blessing}’(۶); and He says: ‘Call Me, I will answer you.’(۷)”(۸)

Abdullah bin Walid al-Wasafi reports from Imam as-Sadiq (‘a), “{There are} three things with which nothing can cause harm {to a person}; prayer (du’a’) during hardships, seeking forgiveness (istighfar) after committing a sin, and thankfulness (shukr) when one is given a blessing.”(۹)

These are in fact channels of communication with Allah. Nonetheless, the channels of communication with Allah

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۱- Qur’an, ۴:۱۴۷.

۲- Qur’an, ۸:۳۳.

۳- Qur’an, ۲۵:۷۷.

۴- Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۹۳, pg.۲۹۱.

۵- Qur’an, ۶۵:۳.

۶- Qur’an, ۱۴:۷.

.Qur’an, ۴۰:۶۰ -۷

See: al-Khisal-of as-Saduq, vol.۱, pg.۵۰; al-Mahasin of al-Barqi, pg.۳; and al-Kafi, -۸
.vol.۲, pg.۶۵

.Al-Amali of at-Tusi, pg.۱۲۷ -۹

are many, such as repentance (tawbah), fear (khawf) and awe (khashyah) of Allah, love (hubb) and yearning (shawq) for Allah, and hope in Allah (raja').

However, man's relation with Allah must be structured on a well-arranged collection of the above elements, as Islam does not approve the theory of there being only a single way of communication with Allah.

Prayer is one of the most significant means of communication with Allah and turning toward Him. This is because nothing inspires people to take resort to Allah the way their neediness (hajat) and indigence (faqr) prompt them to do so. Hence, du'a' is among the widest of the doors of communication with Allah.

In his supplication at dawn, Imam Zayn al-'Abidin ('a) says: "All praise is due to Allah whom I call for my need whenever I wish, and confide to Him my secrets whenever I will -without a mediator, and He fulfills my need."

Prayer: the Essence of Worship

Du'a' is the essence and spirit of ibadah. This is because the purpose behind the creation of mankind is to worship Allah, and the goal of worship is to tie man to Allah, the Exalted, and prayer actualizes this goal in an extensive manner and through the strongest of means.

The Holy Prophet (S) is related to have said, "Supplication is the essence (mukkh) of worship. One who maintains supplication shall never perish."(١)

He (S) has also said, "Flee to Allah for your needs, and take refuge with Him in your calamities, and entreat Him and call on Him;

١- Bihar al-Anwar, vol.٩٣, pg.٣٠٠.

for du'a' is the kernel of 'ibadah. There is no believer (mu'min) who calls on Allah except that He answers him; He will either speed up {in granting him} his request in this world, or He will delay it for him to the Hereafter, or He will expiate of his sins as much as he has implored Him, so long as he does not pray for a wrong deed."(١)

The above narration illustrates for us the path of the journey of man toward Allah in prayer, and the manner in which he should turn toward Him. Just ponder on these statements: 'Flee to Allah for your needs', 'take refuge with Him in your calamities' and 'entreat (tadarru') Him'.

In another tradition, the Holy Prophet (S) says: "Supplication is the weapon (silah) of a believer and the pillar ('imad) of religion."(٢)

The reason behind prayer being the pillar of religion is that the foundation of religion is the journey toward Allah, whilst prayer is turning toward Him, and commencing this journey. And since the reality of prayer is turning toward Allah, it is the most liked and the most revered of things in the eyes of Allah.

The Holy Prophet (S) says: "There is no thing more honourable (akram) in the eyes of Allah than du'a."(٣)

Hannan bin Sudair relates from his father, "I said to al-Baqir ('a), 'Which act of worship is the best?' He ('a) replied, 'Nothing is more lovable to Allah than that He should be asked and besought of

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١- Ibid., pg. ٣٠٢.

٢- Ibid., pg. ٢٨٨.

٣- Makarim al-Akhlaq, pg. ٣١١.

what He possesses. There is no one more disliked by Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, than him who is disdainful of His worship and does not ask Him of what He possesses."(1)

In his supplication for the day of Wednesday, Amir al-Mu'minin 'Ali bin Abi Talib ('a) says: "All praise is due to Allah whose pleasure (mardat) is in petition to Him and begging for what is with Him, and whose anger is in lack of insistence in imploring Him."

A phrase in the supplication of kumayl reads, "...For you have decreed upon your servants to worship You, and have commanded them to supplicate You and assured them that they would be answered; so to You, O my Lord, I have turned my face, and toward You, O my Lord, I have extended my hand..."

Disregard for Prayer is to Turn Away from Allah

Allah, the Exalted, says:

"Your Lord has said, 'Call Me, I will answer you. Indeed those who are disdainful of My worship will enter hell in utter humility."(2)

According to this verse, being disdainful (istikbar) of worship ('ibadah) implies disregard for prayer, as the context of the verse exhorts to prayer when it says: 'Call on Me', and immediately after this it says: 'those who are disdainful of My worship will enter hell in utter humility'.

Hence, disregard of prayer according to the above verse is tantamount to being arrogant in worship; as it implies turning away (i'rad) from Allah. The same has been reported from Imam as-Sadiq ('a) regarding the interpretation of the above verse. He

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١- Ibid, pg.٣١١. See also al-Mahasin of al-Barqi, pg.٢٩٢.

٢- Qur'an, ۴٠:۶٠.

"!a) says: "{Supplication} is, by Allah, the worship ('ibadah), it is -by Allah- the worship')

Hammad bin 'Isa reports from Imam as-Sadiq ('a), "Supplication is indeed the worship ('ibadah). Allah, the Exalted, says: 'Those who are disdainful of My worship will enter (hell in utter humility.'"(۱) (۲

Man holds no status in the eyes of Allah but by virtue of supplication and to the extent that he prays to Allah. And Allah, the Exalted, cares for His servant as much as he ,implores Him and turns toward Him

(Say, 'What store my Lord would set by you were it not for your supplication?"(۳"

This is because the reality of supplication is equivalent to turning toward Allah (iqbal), as disregard for it is turning away (i'rad) from Him. And Allah does not care for one .who turns away from Him, nor will he hold any status in His eyes

Imam al-Baqir ('a) says in a narration, "No one is more hated by Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, than he who shows arrogance in worshipping Him and does not ask Him (for that which lies with Him."(۴

The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said, "You must implore Allah or else He will be wrathful at you. Indeed Allah has servants who do {righteous} deeds, so He gives them {of His mercy}; and there are others who sincerely ask Him, so He grants them. Thereafter, He will gather all of them in the Heaven. So those who performed {good} deeds shall say, 'Our

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.Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.۱۰۸۳ -۱

Imam as-Sajjad ('a) says in Sahifat as-Sajjadiyyah, supplication no.۴۵, "And You -۲ have said, 'Call Me, I will answer you. Indeed those who are disdainful of My worship will enter hell in utter humility.' Hence You have named supplicating You 'worship' and refraining from it 'disdain', and You have threatened that the refraining from it would {.yield entrance into hell in utter humility." {Trns

.Qur’an, ۲۵:۷۷ -۳

.Wasa’il al-Shi’ah, vol.۴, pg.۱۰۸۴, hadith no.۸۶۰۴ -۴

Lord, You gave us because we acted {righteously}, but why did You give to these {people}?' He will say, 'These are my servants. I gave you your reward without wasting anything of your deeds. These people besought Me, hence I gave them and enriched them; this is My grace, I give it to whomsoever I desire."(۱)

Allah Yearns for the Supplication of His Servant

When a servant turns toward Allah by way of supplication, then he is loved by Allah. And if he turns away from Him, He is disliked by him.

Nevertheless, Allah, the Exalted, may delay in responding to the prayer of his servant so that his standing before Him, his turning toward Him, and his entreating Him may be prolonged; for Allah loves to hear the imploration of His servant and yearns for his prayer and secret conversation with Him (munajat).

Imam al-Kazim ('a) is reported to have said, "Verily, Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, delays in answering a believer out of desire for his imploration and says: 'This is a voice I love to hear.' And He quickly responds to the prayer of a hypocrite and says: 'This is a voice I hate.'"(۲)

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) says: "Pray to Allah frequently, for Allah loves His believing servants to call on Him and He has indeed promised them the response."(۳)

Imam 'Ali ('a) is related to have said, "The most lovable of acts to Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, on this earth is supplication."(۴)

It has been reported that Imam al-Baqir ('a) used to say, "When a believer entreats Allah, the

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۱- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.۱۰۸۴, hadith no.۸۶۰۹.

۲- Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۹۷, pg.۲۹۶.

۳- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.۱۰۸۶, hadith no.۸۶۱۶.

۴- Ibid, pg.۱۰۸۹, hadith no.۸۶۳۹.

All-mighty, the Majestic, for a need, He delays in responding to him quickly, out of love for {hearing} his voice and listening to his lamentation."(1)

Abu 'Abdillah as-Sadiq ('a) says: "{It so happens that} a servant makes supplication and Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, says to the two angels, 'I have indeed answered him, but confine him to his need, for I love listening to his voice.' And {at times} a servant makes a petition and Allah, the Blessed, the Exalted, says: 'Grant his need quickly, for I hate his voice."(2)

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) is reported to have said, "When a servant -who is a friend of Allah, implores Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, for a matter which concerns him, then it is said to the angel appointed over him, 'Fulfill the need of My servant, but do not hurry, for I long to listen to his voice and call.' And when a servant -who is a foe of Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, calls on Allah regarding a matter which concerns him, it is said to the angel appointed over him, 'Fulfill his need and make haste, as I dislike to listen to his voice and call."(3)

Asking one's Needs from Other than Allah

Allah, the Exalted, dislikes the pleading of people with one another for their needs, as He loves a believer to honour his self and his hand by refraining from begging from others. Besides, He, the Exalted, loves to be beseeched by the believers, and loves their imploration and supplication to Him.

The Holy Prophet (S)

1- Qurb al-Asnad, pg.١٧١; and Usul al-Kafi, pg.۵٢۶.

2- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.١١١٢, hadith no.٨٧٣١; and Usul al-Kafi, pg.۵٢۶.

3- Usul al-Kafi, pg.۵٢٧; and Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.١١١٢, hadith no.٨٧٣٢.

says: “Indeed Allah has loved one thing for Himself and has abhorred it for His creatures. He has disliked for His creatures {their} pleading {with one another}, and has loved for Himself to be entreated {by them}. There is nothing more beloved to Allah than that He should be besought. Hence, none of you should be ashamed of asking Allah of His bounties, even if it is for the strap of a sandal.”(١)

Imam as-Sadiq (‘a) is reported to have said, “Allah loves a servant to ask from Him {even} for {commiting} a great sin, and He hates a servant who takes lightly the smaller sins.”(٢)

Muhammad bin ‘Ajlan relates:

“I was caught in a great poverty and constraint, and he who is in constraint has no friend. I was also in a great and heavy debt and was under pressure to repay it. So I set out toward the house of Hasan bin Zayd –who was then the governer of Madinah, as we used to know each other. Muhammad bin ‘Abdillah bin ‘Ali bin al-Husain (‘a) – whom I knew well for long- realized from my condition where I was heading toward. He met me on the way and took hold of my hand and said, ‘I have come to know of what you are intending to do. Who do you entertain hope in to remove what has befallen you?’

‘Hasan bin Zayd’, I replied.

He said, ‘In this case, he is not going to fulfill your need, nor will your request be

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١- Furu’ al-Kafi, vol.١, pg.١٩۶; and Man la Yahduruhu al-Faqih, vol.١, pg.٢٣.

٢- Al-Mahasin of al-Barqi, pg.٢٩٣; and Bihar al-Anwar, vol.٩٣, pg.٢٩٢.

granted. You must ask One who is capable of doing that, One who is the Most Generous of those who are generous. Seek from Him what you are hoping for; for I have heard my cousin, Ja'far bin Muhammad, narrating from his father, who related from his grandfather, who reported from his father Husain bin 'Ali ('a), who narrated :from his father 'Ali bin Abi Talib ('a), who reported the Holy Prophet (S) saying

Allah revealed to some of His prophets in some of His revelations saying, 'By My' might and majesty, I will indeed sever the hope of one who entertains hope in other than Me with despair, and I will clothe him with the dress of humiliation among the people, and I will distance him from My salvation and bounties. Does My servant entertain hope in other than Me during hardships, while all the hardships are in My ?hand

And does he anticipate from other than Me, while I am the All-sufficient and the Generous? In my hand are the keys of the closed doors, and My door is open for one who calls on Me. Do you not know that when one is afflicted with a calamity, then none other than Me has the ability to remove it from him? Then how come I find him hoping for its removal by turning away from Me, while I have given him out of My ?generosity and grace what he did not ask from Me

Still he turned

away from Me and did not beseech Me, rather he beseeched other than Me during his hardships, while I am Allah, I begin endowment before request (mas'alah). Can it be that I am asked but I do not give generously? Never. Are not generosity and kindness particular to Me? Are not this world and the Hereafter in My hand?

If all the inhabitants of the seven heavens and the earth were to ask Me and I were to grant each of them his request, this would not diminish My kingdom by the like of a fly's wing! And how can a kingdom whose custodian is Me diminish? So wretched be he who disobeys Me and is not conscious of Me.'

So I said to him, 'O son of the Prophet of Allah! Repeat this narration for me.' So he repeated it three times. Then I said, 'By Allah, I am not going to ask anyone for a need after this.' And it was not long before Allah granted me a provision (rizq) from Him."(١)

Acceptance of the Prayer

Prayer is Surrounded by Success and Acceptance

A prayer is surrounded by the mercy of Allah from two sides; by success (tawfiq) from Allah, and by the response (istijabah) from Him.

Basically, a servant cannot engage himself in supplication without the tawfiq from Allah. Such a facilitation by Allah is necessary before supplication. In this case, if a servant calls on Allah, He would indeed answer his prayer:

"Call Me, I will answer you."(٢)

Hence, a prayer is preceeded by success from

١- Bihar al-Anwar, vol.٩٣, pg.٣٠٣-٣٠٤.

٢- Qur'an, ٤٠:٦٠.

Allah and followed by the response from Him. A prayer is always surrounded by these two elements which are, in fact, two doors from among the doors of Allah's mercy which are opened for a servant before and after supplication. It is reported from the Holy Prophet (S) , "For whosoever among you the door of prayer (du'a') is opened, then the doors of mercy (rahmah) shall be opened for him."(١)

Imam 'Ali bin al-Husain, Zayn al-'Abidin ('a), says: "Thus they remembered You by Your benevolence, and thanked You..." The moment a servant remembers his Lord, he comes under the protection of Allah and His grace, and He would, subsequently, deserve to be thanked by his servant.

In the whispered prayer (munajat) of al-muti'in (the obedient toward Allah), of the famous fifteen whispered prayers(٢), Imam as-Sajjad ('a) says: "For we exist through You and belong to You, and we have no means to {reach} You but Yourself."

Thus, a servant does not remember his Lord except after this remembrance has been preceeded by benevolence and grace from Allah, as he has no way to reach Allah but by His grace and mercy. So if he remembers Allah, it is by His grace; and if he prays to Him, it is through the success He, the Exalted, has granted him; and if he thanks Him, it is through His mercy.

In the supplication of 'arafah, Imam al-Husayn ('a) says: "My ignorance and audacity against You did not stop You from guiding me to

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١- Al-Mizan, vol.٢, pg.۴٢, quoting from al-Durr al-Manthur.

٢- Al-munajat al-khams 'asharah.

that which would take me closer to You, and from facilitating for me that which would take me closer to You."

Among the most subtle of prayers is the prayer of man to his Lord, the Exalted, to grant him success to pray to Him. In one of his supplications, Imam 'Ali bin al-Husayn Zayn al-Abidin ('a) says: "Fill my night with life by keeping me awake therein for worshipping You... and setting my needs before You."(1)

In his supplication praying for facilitation (tawfiq) from Allah, Imam as-Sadiq ('a) says: "So assist me in obeying You, and grant me success to carry that which You made incumbent on me, of all which pleases You; for I have not seen anyone who has been able to attain something of Your obedience (ta'ah) except that it was through Your bounty upon him prior to his obedience. So bless me with a bounty through which I can attain Your pleasure (ridwan)."(2)

Imam 'Ali bin al-Husayn ('a) says: "O Allah, make me leap to You in times of distress, ask from You in needs, and plead to You in misery; tempt me not to seek help from other than You when I am distressed."(3)

Two Benefits of the Acceptance of Prayer

There are two benefits in the acceptance of man's prayer by Allah, the Exalted, one of them greater than the other.

The minor benefit is the fulfillment of the request and petition made by him to Allah, be it regarding this world or the Hereafter, or both.

As for the greater benefit, it is the response (ijabah)

١- Sahifat As-Sajjadiyyah, supplication no.۴٧.

٢- Bihar al-Anwar, vol.٩٣, pg.٣٢٠.

٣- Sahifat As-Sajjadiyyah, supplication no.٢٠.

itself from Allah, the Exalted; for every response involves a turning (iqbal) from Allah toward His servant, as every prayer entails a turning of the servant toward Allah.

However valuable a thing may be, it is limited and has an end, but there is no limit and end to the value of the turning of Allah toward His servant. As there is no limit for the felicity of a servant so long as he is under the care, providence and special attention of Allah, the Exalted. This is a felicity above which there is no felicity with which Allah can single out a servant from among His servants; a state in which He turns to him, listens to him, responds to him, and makes him aware of His response, whatever the enormity of the request and petition made by the servant to Allah.

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) is reported to have said, "Once I had called on Allah, so He answered me and I forgot my need; for His response by turning toward His servant when he implores Him is greater and momentous than that which a servant desires from Him, even if it is the Heaven and its everlasting bounties. But this is not comprehended except by the learned ones ('alimun), the lovers (muhibbun), the worshippers ('abidun), the knowers ('arifun), the chosen ones (safwah) of Allah and His special servants."(١)

Hence, prayer (du'a') and the response to it (ijabah) denote a reciprocal relation between Allah and His servant, the best and

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١- Misbah al-Shari'ah, pg.١۴ ١۵; and Bihar al-Anwar, vol.٩٣, pg.٣٢٣.

the most distinctive of its kind. Which relation between Allah, the Exalted, and his servant can be better than the one in which the servant turns toward his Lord with a need, request and petition, and Allah turns to His servant with response, singling him .out for it

I believe that the joy and pleasure derived from this kind of relation with Allah, and from this providence (‘inayah) and success (tawfiq) granted by Him to His servant - when He singles him out for secret conversation with Him, His remembrance and imploring Him, and that He honours him with meeting (liqa’) with Him, getting closer to Him and answering Him- engrosses man and occupies him from his need which he .had presented before Allah

And which pleasure can equal such a pleasure? Or which joy can be on a par with the joy of being in the presence (hudur) of Allah, meeting with Him, whispering to Him, .remembering Him and being occupied in gazing at His majesty and beauty

Standing before Allah for supplication is, in itself, a form of being in the presence of Allah, meeting with Him and whispering to Him. One of the mystics is related to have said, “Among the shameful things for man is that he should ask from Allah, while in His presence, other than Allah, and that he should be occupied in His presence with other ”.than His majesty and beauty

A Divine Narration (hadith al-qudsi) related by the Holy Prophet (S) says: “He

who is occupied by my mention (dhikri) from asking Me, I shall give him the best of what I give to the beseechers (sa'ilin)."(1)

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) says: "If a servant who has a need to Allah begins {his prayer} with praising Allah and sending blessings on Muhammad and his Progeny, to the extent that he forgets his need, then He will fulfill it without him asking Him for it."(2)

In the whispered prayer (munajat) of al-muhibbin (the lovers), Imam Zayn al-'Abidin ('a) says: "O my Lord... make us among those whose heart You have captivated for Your will, whom You have chosen for seeing You, whose attention You have secured purely for Yourself, whose heart You have freed for Your love, whom You have made desirous of what is with You... and from whom You have cut off all things which cut him off from You."

The Relation of the Response to Prayer

"Your Lord has said, 'Call Me, I will answer you. Indeed those who are disdainful of My worship will enter hell in utter humility."(3)

What is the relationship of the response (istijabat) to prayer? And how is the acceptance of a prayer accomplished? We will attempt to address this issue in this section, by the will of Allah.

The response from Allah, the Exalted, is indeed accomplished through the Divine laws (qawanin) and norms (sunan), as it is true of all other Divine acts.

It should be noted, however, that there is nothing like affection (infi'al) in the case of Allah, the Exalted, as is the case

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۱- Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۹۳, pg.۳۲۳.

۲- Ibid, pg.۳۱۲.

۳- Qur'an, ۴۰:۶۰.

with us, the human beings, when we get angry or are happy, or when we are active or worn out. Rather, the act (fi'l) of Allah is a law and norm which does not change in cases of satisfaction or anger, expansion (bast) or contraction (qabd), giving ('ata') or .withholding (imsak); all these take place within the fixed Divine laws and norms

These Divine norms (as-Sunan al-ilahiyyah) operate in the realm of the unseen .(ghayb) as they operate in physics, chemistry and mechanics, without any difference

(And you will never find any change in Allah's precedent (sunnat)."(۱"

(And you will never find alteration in the norm of Allah."(۲"

Now, what is the norm (sunnah) of Allah with respect to the acceptance (istijabah) of a ?prayer

Prayer: the Key of Mercy

In the Islamic sources, the relation between prayer and response has been referred to by the assertion that 'prayer is the key to the response.' This statement denotes the kind of relation between prayer and response. Imam 'Ali ('a) says: "Supplication is (the key of mercy."(۳

In his will to his son al-Hasan ('a), Imam Amir al-Mu'minin 'Ali bin Abi Talib ('a) says: "Thereafter, He put the keys of His treasuries in your hand, in that He has allowed {you} to ask Him from it. So whenever you wished, you opened the doors of His (treasuries through supplication."(۴

The phrase 'So whenever you wished, you opened the doors of His treasures through supplication' has a clear indication to the kind of relation which exists between prayer .and response

,Therefore

.Qur'an, ۳۳:۶۲ -۱

.Qur’an, ۳۵:۴۳ -۲

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۹۳, pg.۳۰۰ -۳

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۷۷, pg.۲۹۹ -۴

supplication is the key by which we unlock the treasuries of Allah's mercy. The treasuries of Allah's mercy have no end, but not everyone possesses the keys to His treasuries, and not everyone is able to open the treasuries of His mercy.

With reference to the verse:

"Whatever mercy Allah unfolds for the people, no one can withhold it"(1),

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) is reported to have said, "{The mercy implies} the prayer (du'a')."(2) In other words, supplication is the very key by which Allah opens the doors of His mercy for the people, and which He has placed in their hands.

The Holy Prophet (S) says: "For whosoever among you the door of prayer (du'a') is opened, the doors of response (ijabat) shall {also} be opened for him."(3)

It is Allah who opens up toward His servant with prayer, and He is the one who opens for him the doors of its acceptance.

Imam 'Ali ('a) says: "Whoever knocks at the door of Allah, the Glorious, it will be opened for him."(4)

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) is narrated to have said, "Supplicate frequently, for it is the key of every mercy and the fulfillment of every need. And that which lies with Allah cannot be attained but through prayer (du'a'). A door which is frequently knocked at is likely to be opened for the one who knocks it."(5)

Imam Amir al-Mu'minin 'Ali ('a) says: "Prayer (du'a') is the key of fulfillment and the key of success. And the best prayer is that which emanates from

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۱- Qur'an, ۳۵:۲.

۲- Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۹۳, pg.۲۹۹.

۳- Kanz al-'Ummal, hadith no.۳۱۵۶.

۴- Ghurar al-Hikam, hadith no.۸۲۹۲.

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۹۳, pg.۲۹۵; and Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.۱۰۸۶, hadith no.۸۶۱۶ -۵

a pure breast and a pious heart."(1)

The Holy Prophet (S) once said, "Shall I show you a weapon that will deliver you from your enemies and increase in your provision (rizq)?"

{His companions} said, "Indeed!"

He said, "Supplicate your Lord day and night, for the weapon of a believer is supplication."(2)

Action and Prayer: the Two Keys of Allah's Mercy

Allah, the Exalted, has placed in our hands two keys through which we can unlock the treasures of His mercy, and seek through them His provision (rizq) and bounties. These two keys are action ('amal) and prayer (du'a'). Neither dispenses with the other. Action does not dispense with prayer, nor does prayer dispense with putting effort. Therefore, one should not confine himself to prayer to the exclusion of endeavour.

In his advice to Abu Dharr, the Holy Prophet (S) is narrated to have said, "O Aba Dharr! The example of he who supplicates without acting is that of him who shoots {an arrow} without a bow."(3)

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) says: "The call of three people is rejected; a person who sits in his home and says: 'O my Lord, give me sustenance', so it is said to him, 'Did I not appoint for you the way to seek provision?'..."(4)

However, it is also not correct that one should confine himself to acting and forsake supplication.

The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said, "Indeed Allah has servants who do {righteous} deeds, so He gives them {of His mercy}; and there are others who sincerely ask Him, so He grants

۱- Wasa’il al-Shi’ah, vol.۴, pg.۱۰۹۴, hadith no.۸۶۵۷; and Usul al-Kafi, vol.۲, pg.۵۱۷.

۲- Wasa’il al-Shi’ah, vol.۴, pg.۱۰۹۵, hadith no.۸۶۵۸.

۳- Wasa’il al-Shi’ah, abwab al-du’a’, bab no.۳۲, hadith no.۳.

۴- Wasa’il al-Shi’ah, kitab as-Salat, abwab al-du’a’, bab no.۵۰, hadith no.۳.

them. Thereafter, He will gather all of them in the Heaven. So those who performed {good} deeds shall say, 'Our Lord, You gave us because we acted {righteously}, but why did You give to these {people}?' He will say, 'These are my servants. I gave you your reward without wasting anything of your deeds. These people besought Me, hence I gave them and enriched them; this is My grace, I give it to whosoever I desire."(١)

Allah, the Exalted, has made prayer a means to compensate for the inadequacy of man's efforts, so that he might not rely on himself and be deluded with what he has been given of power and strength, and with the efforts he has put.

Hence, action and prayer are two keys among the greatest keys through which man unlocks the doors of Allah's mercy.

We are not concerned at the moment about discussing the 'action' and its relation to Allah's mercy vis-à-vis the relation between 'prayer' and the treasures of Allah's mercy and that between the action and prayer; for this relation is among the principal Islamic issues.

He, the Exalted, bestows upon His servants because of both, effort and prayer. This implies that Allah gives His servants through what is with them and what is not with them. What is with them is their efforts, actions, and what they send forth before Allah of their endeavour and spend of their persons and wealth. What is not with them is denoted by their indigence (faqr) and neediness

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١- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.١٠٨۴, hadith no.٨۶٠٩.

.hajat) to Allah, and their presentation of poverty and need before Allah)

Through each of these two man attracts the mercy of Allah; by raising toward Him his efforts, actions, his self and wealth, and by displaying before Him his need, indigence, .non-existence and desperation

The Relation between Prayer and Action

It would not be correct to try to fathom prayer (du'a') independent of the norms (sunan) of Allah; for He, the Exalted, has laid for His servants some norms in the universe, and with respect to their affairs and needs. Thus, people ought not to .neglect these norms in their affairs and wishes

However, prayer is not a substitute for these norms, nor does following these norms dispense man of prayer. To comprehend this point is to understand one of the subtle .Lorldly (rabbaniyyah) customs in Islam

Hence, a farmer, for instance, should not confine himself to prayer only, forsaking ploughing, irrigating the land, pulling out the weeds, looking after the plants, protecting them from diseases and so on; for such a prayer shall never be accepted as it is categorized under this narration from Imam as-Sadiq ('a), "One who ".supplicates without acting is like one who shoots {an arrow} without a bow

Similarly, the prayer of a sick man would not be accepted if he does not visit a physician and consume medication. How can such a prayer be answered when the supplicant has turned away from the norms (sunan) of Allah? No prayer can be ;accepted but within the framework of the Divine norms

for the one who answers the call of His servants is the very one who has laid these norms in nature, and he is the one who has commanded His servants to follow these norms, and seek their provision and needs through them.

He, the Exalted, says in this regard:

"It is He who made the earth tractable for you; so walk on its flanks and eat of His provision..."(1)

and:

"And when the prayer (salat) is finished, disperse through the land and seek Allah's grace..."(2)

In the same way that prayer cannot be a substitute for putting effort, likewise acting cannot be a substitute for prayer; for the keys of this universe are in the hand of Allah, He bestows upon His servants through prayer what they are not able to achieve by their efforts, as He facilitates for them by virtue of prayer those natural means (al-asbab at-Tabi'iyyah) which they are unable to attain by their endeavours.

However, the facilitation of the natural means by Allah for His servant does not imply that one becomes needless of prayer, petition and invoking Allah. This is because it is Allah, the Exalted, who expands (al-basit) and tightens (al-qabid), who gives and withholds, who benefits and harms, who gives life and causes death, who exalts and abases; in His hand are the keys of the universe; nothing in the universe can disobey His command; every power in this universe which can benefit or harm is subject to His order and strength.

The natural agents in

۱- Qur'an, ۶۷:۱۵.

۲- Qur'an, ۶۲:۱۰.

this vast universe have no independent existence from the will (iradah) of Allah and His power, so that by employing them man should needless of prayer, petition and imploring Allah. And we glorify and declare Allah to be above what the Jews say about :Him

(The hand of Allah is tied up!"(١)"

:Instead we believe in what the Qur'an says

(Rather His hands are wide open."(٢)"

Hence, we interact with Allah in all situations, as we do not distinguish between interaction with Allah and interaction with the norms which Allah laid as means for the provision of His servants. We believe that these norms and natural causes benefit and harm us in extension to the will (iradah), desire (mashi'ah) and strength of Allah, not .independent of, and on a par with, the Divine will and power

Moreover, we perceive the hand of Allah, the Exalted, His mercy, bounties and wisdom in all of our affairs, small and big, as we perceive the will of Allah, facilitation by Him (tawfiq) and His favours throughout our lives. Thus, we are in need of Allah at every moment and at every turn of our lives, and we are destitute in the face of His mercy, bounties, care, success and guidance. Accordingly, we pray to Him that He alone should take charge of all our affairs with uprightness, and we seek refuge with Him that He should not leave us on our own even for a moment, and should not make us dependent on other than

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١- Qur'an, ۵:۶۴.

٢- Qur'an, ۵:۶۴.

.Himself

However, the like of the above supplication does not mean that since one has asked Allah to take charge of His needs, he should now keep away his needs and affairs from the people and should not employ the natural causes operating in the universe. It rather implies that one should pray to Allah to make his need toward others in extension to his need toward Him, the Exalted, and to make his reliance on other than Him in extension to his reliance on Him, and to make his dealing with other than Him in extension to his dealing with Allah, not independent of Him or in parallel (‘ard) to one’s dependency on Him, the Exalted; for all the causes in this universe are, at the first stage, subservient to Allah, and He it is who has made them subservient to His .creatures

Employing the natural means and relying on them in extension to the interaction with Allah and relying on Him is, in fact, the essence of tawhid (monotheism) toward which the Qur’an invites the people. The effect of the natural causes is not in parallel to, nor .independent of, the existence (wujud) and act (fi’l) of Allah

It is on this basis that we say that man should pray to Allah in all affairs and ask Him for everything, small or big; from the salt of his bread and the fodder of his cattle to the victory against the enemy in the battlefields. None of his affairs

in life should be an exception to this principle. He should not consider himself needless of Allah in any of his needs and requests by relying on other than Him from among His .creatures

At the same time, we believe that seeking asylum with Allah in everything and asking Him for everything does not contradict man's employment of the means which Allah has created for him and made subservient to him in this world. Hence, he should pray to Allah for his health and recovery from illness, and thereafter utilize all that which .Allah has placed as means of remedy and physical well-being in the field of medicine

To the extent that we believe that if one were to break this equilibrium and then pray to Allah, away from the norms of Allah in this universe, his prayer would not be .'answered and he would rather be like 'an archer who shoots without a bow

With this clear and subtle vision, Islam tries to educate us as to how to deal with Allah and His norms in the universe. And with this very perspective, we find the supplications from our A'immah ('a) replete with beseeching Allah that He alone should take charge of the affairs of His servant and not to make him dependent on other than Himself, nor entrust him to his own self; and that He should connect his .cord to that of His own, and cut him off from everything which cuts him off from Allah

(Imam Zayn al-'Abidin ('a

says in one of his supplications, “And entrust me not to Your creatures, but take care of my need alone and Yourself attend to sufficing me. Look upon me and look after me in all my affairs ...”(1)

In the supplication of ‘arafah, Imam al-Husayn (‘a) says: “O Allah, suffice me from what I fear, save me against that which I am cautious of, guard me and my religion, protect me in my journey, take charge of my family and property in my absence, bless me in what You have granted me, humble me in my self, make me distinguished in the eyes of the people, guard me against the evil of the jinn and mankind, do not disgrace me because of my sins, do not embarrass me because of my secret, do not put me to test through my deeds, do not deprive me of Your bounties, and do not entrust my {affair} to other than You.”

We shall now discuss the relationship between prayer and the response (istijabah).

The Relationship between Prayer and the Response

The comprehension of our {ontological} neediness (hajat) and indigence (faqr) is the very secret by which we can discover the relationship between prayer and response. This would also lead us to understand how prayer can be the key to Allah’s mercy and how can it be effective in attracting the mercy of Allah.

In fact, every prayer embodies a certain degree of the perception of poverty by the supplicant, as it denotes a level among the levels of realization of one’s neediness toward

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1- Sahifat As-Sajjadiyyah, supplication no.۲۲.

Allah. The more one's awareness of his need toward Allah, the closer would be his prayer to acceptance and the nearer he would be to the mercy of Allah. This is because there is no such thing as miserliness in the mercy of Allah. The difference among the people in receiving the mercy of Allah is solely due to the difference in the receptacle of their souls and their capacity.

It is, nonetheless, amazing that the ontological neediness and indigence, and one's awareness of such neediness and indigence, is the receptacle of man through which he procures the mercy of Allah, such that the more his awareness of his neediness toward Allah, the greater his receptacle in which he receives Allah's mercy.

Allah, the Exalted, gives everyone according to his capacity. Everyone procures Allah's mercy according to the wideness of his receptacle; the greater the receptacle, the greater one's share from the mercy of Allah.

Based on what has been said, we can summarize the reality of prayer (du'a') as such:

١. The ontological need (faqr) to Allah.

٢. The perception of the need.

٣. The presentation of the need before Allah.

Each of the three statements differs in meaning from the other. Poverty is other than the perception of it; for there might be a person who is need (faqir) of Allah in everything, but is not aware of his neediness to Him. And at times, he might be aware of his neediness, but he may not be good in raising his need toward

Allah and presenting it before Him, as he may not be good in asking Him and calling upon Him.

It is when these three statements come together that the reality of prayer is realized. It is worthy of note here that the need (faqr), from the philosophical point of view, is not only restricted to the need and dependency in 'the coming into existence' (huduth), the way a building stands in need of a builder. Rather, it implies the 'need' both in the 'coming into existence' as well as in the 'continuity of the existence' (baqa'), exactly the way the light produced from electricity is in constant need of the flow of electrons. The lantern will give light so long as there is a constant flow of electrons, such that there would be an immediate break up in the brighteness if the flow were to be cut even for a moment.

Man's neediness and dependency on Allah is exactly such. His coming into existence as well as the continuity of his existence is dependent. The existence of man, his talents, movement and life are all connected to Allah, and they are in need of Him, moment after moment, constantly and continuously. He, the Exalted, says:

"O mankind! You are the ones who stand in need of Allah, and Allah- He is the All-sufficient, the All-laudable."(1)

The need and indigence attract Allah's mercy, whether man is aware of them or not, and whether he raises them to Allah and presents them before

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1- Qur'an, ۳۵:۱۵.

Him or not. However, the poverty and neediness, which is perceived by man and raised toward Allah and presented before Him, is much stronger in attracting Allah's .mercy

Accordingly, we will talk about the 'need' (faqr) and its relation to the 'mercy of Allah', .before and after its perception and presentation before Allah

The Need before its Perception and Presentation before Allah

The ontological need (faqr) toward Allah inherently attracts the mercy of Allah, even before one becomes aware of it and raises it to Allah. The example of need is that of a .low and soft land which naturally attracts water and absorbs it

On the contrary, the parable of haughtiness and disdain for worshipping Allah is that of a high and solid land which does not accept water. Such are the people who are disdainful of Allah's worship and of calling upon Him in repelling the mercy of Allah. Accordingly, He deprives them of it, even though His mercy embraces the heavens .and the earth

There exists an ontological (takwiniyyah) relation between indigence (faqr) and the mercy of Allah. Each of the two seeks the other and pursues it. The need toward Allah is in pursuit of Allah's mercy, and the mercy of Allah seeks the object of need and .indigence

This is similar to the relation that exists between the weakness and neediness of a baby and the love and affection of a mother, each of the two seeks the other; the feebleness of the infant seeks the affection of the mother, whilst the affection and sympathy of

the mother are in pursuit of the weakness of the infant, so that she may take care of her. In fact, in the sphere of the contingent existents (mumkinat), each of the two is in need of the other, such that the need of the mother toward caring for the weakness of the infant is, in no way, lesser than the need of the infant for the sympathy of her .mother

Similarly, a learned man is in search of an ignorant one so that he may teach him, as is the ignorant man in pursuit of a learned one so that he may learn from him. Here also, the need for a learned man to impart his knowledge to the ignorant is not lesser than .the need of an ignorant man to learn from the learned

Likewise, a physician seeks the sick to cure him, such that he declares his profession and specialization in order to attract the sick toward himself. So is the sick in pursuit of a physician. And the need of a physician for the sick is not lesser than the need of the .sick toward the physician

The strong always searches for the weak in order to support him, as the weak is in pursuit of the strong in so that he may take shelter with him. In this case too, the need of the strong to defend the weak is not lesser than the need of the weak for the .protection of the strong

,In brief

.this is the norm (sunnah) of Allah which is functioning in everything

The same applies to the mercy of Allah and the ontological indigence of his creatures. .The way the need seeks Allah's mercy, so is the mercy in search of the need

It should, however, be noted here that the Beautiful Attributes (sifat al-husna) of Allah are above any need and His divinity is beyond all needs. Rather, the mercy of Allah .seeks the objects of need and indigence

Also, His divinity is beyond any miserliness. Accordingly, the difference in the levels of .mercy is due to the difference in the levels of need and indigence

The land needs heat, light, water, and air for its growth, and Allah, the Exalted, grants her with what it needs. This 'need' of her is an ontological (takwini) request and demand. Whatever a thing is in need of and demands by nature, then that is its :request and demand in an ontological language. Allah, the Exalted, says in this regard

Everyone in the heavens and the earth asks Him. Everyday He is in a different" (state."(۱

.And that which a thing needs and demands ontologically is never left unanswered

When a suckling baby, who has no knowledge of her own self, becomes thirsty and the thirst becomes unbearable for her, Allah, the Exalted, teaches her to express her need by crying and weeping, as He awakens the sympathy of her father and mother .towards her so that they may attend to her and give her drink

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.Qur'an, ۵۵:۲۹ -۱

The thirst and hunger of the infant attracts the mercy and affection of Allah without there being any request and demand from the infant. In the same way, the pain and difficulties which a sick person undergoes invoke the mercy of Allah.

We, the human beings, disobey Allah and commit sins. But the very wrong deeds we commit seek the forgiveness of Allah by means of prayer and asking, and at times even without that. However, this is so long as the servant does not rebel against his Master and does not become stone-hearted such that he is driven away from the mercy of Allah:

"Say {that Allah declares}, 'O My servants who have committed excesses against their own souls, do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed Allah will forgive all sins. Indeed He is the All-forgiving, the All-merciful."(١)

This relation which exists between the forgiveness and mercy from Allah and our sins and disobedience, between the power of Allah and our weakness, between His Self-sufficiency and our poverty, between the cure He grants us and our illness, between His salvation and our being in need of Him desperately, and between His knowledge and our ignorance and our exceeding the limits set by Him, even without there being a request, demand and prayer from our side, is to be considered as one of the secrets of Islam in my opinion, as it is also among the secrets of this universe and the laws that govern it. And unless man understands

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١- Qur'an, ٣٩:٥٣.

this law in the universe and comprehends it within the context of man's relation with Allah, he will not be able to understand a major part of the teachings of this religion .and its secrets

:How many a sick has been cured by Allah's mercy without demand and prayer

(And when I get sick, it is He who cures me."(۱)"

How many a needy and hungry whom Allah provided and appeased his hunger without him asking and praying to Allah. How many a helpless in the depth of the oceans, or beneath the rubbles, or under the swords, or amidst the burning fire, has .been embraced by the mercy of Allah and rescued without asking and imploring Him

How many a thirsty who could not resist the severity of his thirst was surrounded by Allah's mercy and was satisfied without having prayed for it from Allah. How many a person who counters a danger such that he is within two bow's length from it, whether he is aware of it or not, but the covering of Allah (sitr allah) overtakes him .and and rescues Him

How many a person has reached a blind alley in life and Allah has opened for him thousands of ways without him asking Him, rather without even having much knowledge of his Master; let aside the case wherein he would know Him but not ask from Him. And how many a suckling baby has been embraced by the mercy of Allah without her praying to

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.Qur'an, ۲۶:۸۰ -۱

.Him

A phrase in the supplication of al-iftitah reads, "O Allah, how many troubles You have relieved me of, griefs You have dispelled, mistakes You have undone, blessings You ".have spread, and series of afflictions You have separated

A phrase in a prayer of the holy month of Rajab says: "O He who gives to one who asks Him, O He who gives to one who does not ask Him and does not know Him, out of ".His affection and mercy

The following has appeared in the whispered prayer (munajat) of rajabiyyah, "But Your forgiveness preceeds our deeds." This statement implies that the forgiveness of .Allah is constantly seeking our wrong deeds

Hence, the ontological need and poverty are among the places where Allah's mercy descends. Wherever there is this kind of indigence and neediness, there you will find .the mercy of Allah

The famous Persian mystical poet has a remarkable verse in this regard. He says: "Do not ask for water; ask for thirst, so that water might spring up from everywhere ".around you

This relation between the mercy of Allah and the need of His servants has also been :(refered to in the eloquent and touching whispered prayer of Amir al-Mu'minin 'Ali ('a

" My Master, O my Master! You are the Master and I the servant! Has anyone mercy upon the servant but the Master? My Master, O my Master! You are the Possessor and I the possessed! Has anyone mercy upon the possessed but the Possessor? My Master, O my Master! You are

?the Exalted and I the abased! Has anyone mercy upon the abased but the Exalted

My Master, O my Master! You are the Creator and I the created! Has anyone mercy upon the created but the Creator? My Master, O my master! You are the Strong and I ?the weak! Has anyone mercy upon the weak but the Strong

My master, O my Master! You are the Needless and I the needy! Has anyone mercy upon the needy but the Needless? My Master, O my Master! You are the Giver and I the beggar! Has anyone mercy upon the beggar but the Giver? My Master, O my Master! You are the Living and I the dead! Has anyone mercy upon the dead but the "?Living

This was all about the need before it is realized by man and before his demand from .'Allah. It can also be termed as the 'un-realized need

The Need after its Perception and Request

This is the need which man perceives and raises it toward Allah. Sometimes man realizes his neediness toward Allah and raises it to Him and presents it before Him, .'asking Him and praying to Him. This is what is known as the 'realized need

This need which is accompanied with awareness and request attracts the mercy of Allah more than the first kind of need which is devoid of prayer (du'a'). The mercy of Allah descends at both places, here and there, but the need which is accompanied with request and prayer is much stronger in attracting Allah's mercy, as

.His mercy is more responsive to the second kind of need than the first one

:It is the second kind of need that the following verse in the Qur'an refers to

Is not He who answers the call of the distressed {person} when he invokes Him and" (removes his distress..."(١

This verse focuses on two points, distress and prayer, as it says: "...the distressed {person} when he invokes Him." Each of the 'distress' and 'prayer' attract Allah's mercy. But when both of them come together, then the descent of Allah's mercy is .inevitable

There has been great emphasis in Islam on prayer and request from Allah, giving importance to presenting one's need before Allah and invoking His mercy. Parallel to this, we find in the Islamic sources that a prayer is always accompanied by the :(response (istijabah

(Your Lord has said, 'Call Me, I will answer you.'"(٢"

On the other hand, the Qur'an insists that the value of a servant in the eyes of Allah is :due to his prayer (du'a') to Him

(Say, 'My Lord would not care for you were it not for your supplication...'"(٣"

The Qur'an also asserts that disregard for prayer is equal to showing arrogance in :worshipping Allah

Your Lord has said, 'Call Me, I will answer you.' Indeed, those who are disdainful of" (My worship will enter hell in utter humility."(۴

It is obvious that being arrogant in worshipping Allah is to be arrogant toward Allah Himself. And whoever is arrogant toward Allah, he will be driven away

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.Qur'an, ۲۷:۶۲ -١

۲- Qur'an, ۴۰:۶۰.

۳- Qur'an, ۲۵:۷۷.

۴- Qur'an, ۴۰:۶۰.

".from the mercy of Allah and "…will enter hell in utter humility

The Three Laws Regarding the Relation between Prayer and the Response

Let us ask why the descent of Allah's mercy is more intense if the need is accompanied with prayer (du'a')? And why is the relation between prayer and the response much stronger here than in the first case, that is, in the relation between the ?need which is devoid of prayer and the mercy of Allah

By answering this question we will answer the question with which we began this section, that is, 'What is the secret behind the relation between prayer and its '?acceptance

Our reply to the above question is that prayer attracts the mercy of Allah based on the .following three laws

The first law is the relation which exists between the need (faqr) and the mercy of .Allah, as we have just explained in the above passages

Each state from among the different states of prayer (du'a') entails the state of indigence and neediness toward Allah's mercy. This is the first station among the .various stations of Allah's mercy

The second law is denoted by the relation between the 'need' after its realization and the 'mercy of Allah'. No doubt, the 'realized' need differs from the need before its perception. Both of them are need and indigence, and both of them attract Allah's mercy and invoke it. However, one of them is of the kind of the 'non-realized' need (al-faqr ghayr al-wa'i), while the other is of the kind of the 'realized' need (al-faqr al-.(wa'i

The 'non-realized' need

is a state in which man is in need of Allah without him being aware of his neediness .toward Him, as, at times, he might not even know Him

By the ‘realized’ need we mean a state in which the needy is well aware of his ontological need toward Allah. This awareness brings out the ‘need to Allah’ from the darkness into the light, whereas the ‘non-realized’ need continues to remain in .darkness, unnoticed by the needy

The needy who is aware of his ontological indigence to Allah can attract from the mercy of Allah and His grace what a needy who is unaware of his neediness cannot. It is as if being aware of the need solidifies the state of neediness, such that the greater and more firm the neediness, the greater the capacity of the soul for receiving the .mercy of Allah

We mentioned earlier that there is nothing like inability and miserliness with regard to the treasuries of Allah’s mercy. Rather, it is the capability of the people in receiving the mercy of Allah that differs. The greater the capacity of a person, the greater would be his share from the mercy of Allah. The capacity here implies the ‘ontological poverty’ which gets intensified as man’s degree of awareness about his own .neediness toward Allah increases

For instance, a guilty person who is aware that he is being taken for execution is able to attract the sympathy of the people and the rulers much more than a guilty

who is being taken for execution without being aware of that. Although both of them are being taken for the same kind of execution, one who has confessed his guilt and knows the punishment that awaits him attracts the affection of the people more than .others; as he is aware of his crime and punishment while the other is not

Signs of the Realization of One's Neediness to Allah

The awareness of man about his neediness toward Allah has signs which become manifest in his prayer to Him. The higher the degree of one's awareness of his need .to Allah, the more distinct shall be these signs in his prayer

Among the most significant of these signs are: humility (khushu'), submission (khudu'), weeping (buka') and pleading (tadarru'), turning (iqbal) toward Allah, and the state of .desperation (idtirar) and taking resort (luju') with Allah during prayer

There has been great emphasis in the Islamic sources on these spiritual states and .signs during supplication as well as on their role in its acceptance

In matter of fact, these signs reveal the intensified presence of the second and third elements in the prayer, that is, the 'perception of one's indigence' and the 'petition and pleading with Allah'. The increase in one's imploration, humility and desperation during prayer signifies, firstly, the profundity of one's demand and request, and secondly one's awareness of his need toward Allah. These two things are effective in .the acceptance of a prayer during the aforesaid spiritual states

There has appeared in the Qur'an injunctions and exhortation to acquire these .spiritual states

:We will mention here some of them

(You invoke Him suppliantly (tadarru'an) and secretly (khufyatan)..."(١..." .١

And supplicate Him with fear (khawfan) and hope (tama'an), indeed Allah's ..." .٢ (mercy is close to the virtuous."(٢

Tadarru' and khawf in the above verses are two states which confirm man's awareness of his need to Allah and his need for protection from Him. Tama' is a state which affirms man's awareness of his desire for that which is with Allah, while praying .secretly (khufyatan) gives rise to the state of 'turning' (iqbal) toward Allah

And the Man of the Fish, when he left in a rage, thinking that We would not put him" .٣ to hardship. Then he cried out in the darkness, 'There is no god except You. You are immaculate. I have indeed been among the wrongdoers.' So We answered his prayer (and delivered him from the agony; and thus do We deliver the faithful."(٣

Here, there is admission and confession of wrongdoing by a servant before Allah, the ".Exalted:"You are immaculate. I have indeed been among the wrongdoers

Confession of an offence is part of one's awareness of the wrong he has done. This in itself deepens in the heart of man the state of pleading for forgiveness and taking shelter with Allah. The higher one's awareness of his offence and sin, the more intense would be his need to Allah, seeking repentance from Him and taking refuge .with Him

And they would supplicate Us with eagerness and awe and were humble before..." .۴ (Us."(۴

Such

.Qur'an, ۶:۶٣ -١

.Qur'an, ٧:۵۶ -٢

۳- ۸۸ ۸۷:۲۱ ,Qur’an.

۴- ۹۰:۲۱ ,Qur’an.

psychic states as eagerness, awe and humilty also confirm man's awareness of his need to Allah, his fear of His punishment, and his desire for that which is with Allah of .the good provision and the best reward

Is not He who answers the call of the distressed {person} when he invokes Him" .۵ (and removes {his} distress ..."(۱

Distress is also a psychic state which affirms man's perception of his poverty and need to Allah, as well as his awareness that there is no means left for salvation and .succour except from Allah

(They supplicate their Lord in fear and hope ..."(۲..." .۶

The response from Allah, the Exalted, comes in accordance with the intensity of man's distress and his awareness of his need, and in accordance with the extent to which he :displays his need in his imploration and prayer. He, the Exalted, says

And supplicate Him with fear and hope, indeed Allah's mercy is close to the ... " (virtuous."(۳

The closeness of Allah's mercy to a servant is proportional to the degree of his fear of Allah's punishment and his eagerness for His benevolence. The more intense the fear in the heart of a servant, the stronger shall be his sense of seeking refuge with Allah, .and the nearer shall be his prayer to acceptance

The third law regarding the relation between prayer and its acceptance, which is among the most evident of the laws that are perceived by man through his innate disposition (fitrat), is the law which has been

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۱- Qur'an, ۲۷:۶۲.

۲- Qur'an, ۳۲:۱۶.

۳- Qur'an, ۷:۵۶.

(asserted by the Qur’an, “Call Me, I will answer you.”(۱

For every call there is a response. And this is exactly what the above verse means. This is a natural and evident law discerned by man through his innate nature. This is a universal law which is operative in all cases except when there is an obstacle standing against the response.

The obstacles which may hinder the response to a prayer are of two types; those related to the one-called (mas’ul), and those related to the one-calling (sa’il).

The impediments related to the one-called can be such as his inability to answer a call, or his being miser in responding. Those related to the one-calling can be such as that the acceptance of his prayer might not be to his benefit whilst he himself is unaware of this, whereas Allah, the Exalted, knows that and hence does not grant him his request.

As for the obstacles related to the one called, there is no room for them in relation to the power of Allah; for His power is absolute, He is not weak, nor does anything elude Him. Nothing is beyond His power and strength, and there is no limit to His existence and generosity. His treasuries never diminish and the frequency of giving increases Him not but in generosity and kindness.

Therefore, impediments of the first kind are unimaginable.

As for the obstacles related to the supplicant, they are conceivable. It often happens that Allah, the Exalted, delays in responding to

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۱- Qur’an, ۴۰:۶۰.

the prayer of His servant, not out of His niggardliness or inability, but because of His knowledge that delay is good for His servant.

Many a times the acceptance of a prayer is harmful to the servant, thus Allah does not answer his prayer and instead recompenses him with either abundant good in this world together with the forgiveness of his sins, or with lofty stations in the world hereafter, or, sometimes, with both of them.

We will first talk about the impediments of the first and the second kind, and thereafter discuss the relation between prayer and the response.

Obstacles of the First Kind

As mentioned earlier, these kind of obstacles are unimaginable in relation to the existence and power of Allah; for His power is absolute, He is not incapable of doing anything, nothing eludes Him, and there is no limit to His power and strength. Everything in this universe is submissive to His power. Nothing refuses to carry out His ontological will and order when He says to it: 'Be' (kun).

He, the Exalted, says in this regard:

"…And when He decides on a matter, He just says to it: 'Be!' and it is.(۱)

"All that We say to a thing, when We will it, is to say to it: 'Be' and it is."(۲)

"All His command, when He wills something, is to say to it: 'Be' and it is."(۳)

Nothing in the universe is out of the fist of His power and strength:

"…Yet the entire earth will be in His fist on the Day of Ressurrection,

p: ۵۱

۱- Qur'an, ۲:۱۱۷

۲- Qur'an, ۱۶:۴۰.

۳- Qur'an, ۳۶:۸۲.

(and the heavens, scrolled, in His right hand…."(1

"Indeed Allah has power over all things."(2)

.His order is accomplished without there being anything to stop or to hinder it

The matter of the Hour is just like the twinkling of an eye, or {even} swifter. … "
(Indeed Allah has power over all things."(3

All this was regarding the vastness of His power and strength, and the .accomplishment of His order and command

Similarly, niggardliness is also inconceivable in relation to Allah. He, the Glorious, the :Exalted, is the Generous to whose generosity and kindness there is no limit

"…Our Lord! You comprehend all things in mercy and knowledge…"(4)

"But if they deny you, say, 'Your Lord is the dispenser of an all-embracing mercy…"(5)

:His bounty is endless, not limited

" To these and to those –to all We extend the bounty of your Lord, and the bounty of
(your Lord is not confined."(6

"As for the felicitous, they will be in paradise… an endless bounty."(7)

:No one can stop the mercy of Allah when He wishes to release it

"Whatever mercy Allah unfolds for the people, no one can withhold it, and whatever
(He withholds, no one can release it after Him…"(8

:There is no end to the treasuries of His mercy

"…Yet to Allah belong the treasuries of the heavens and the earth…"(9)

"There is not a thing but that its sources are with Us, and We do not send it down
(except in a known measure."(10

His treasuries do not run out because of what He grants His

p: ۵۲

۱- Qur'an, ۳۹:۶۷.

۲- Qur'an, ۳:۱۶۵.

۳- Qur'an, ۱۶:۷۷.

۴- Qur'an, ۴۰:۷.

۵- Qur'an, ۶:۱۴۷.

۶- Qur'an, ۱۷:۲۰.

۷- Qur'an, ۱۱:۱۰۸.

۸- Qur'an, ۳۵:۲.

۹- Qur'an, ۶۳:۷.

۱۰- Qur'an, ۱۵:۲۱.

servants of provision. A phrase in the supplication of al-iftitah reads, “All praise is due to Allah whose command and praise are spread among His creation… whose hand is outstretched with generosity, whose treasuries never decrease, {rather} the frequency of giving increases Him not but in generosity and kindness.”

In his will to his son al-Hasan (‘a), based on the narration of Sharif ar-radiyy, Imam ‘Ali (‘a) says:

“Know that He in whose hand are the treasuries of the heavens and the earth has allowed you to supplicate and has guaranteed you its acceptance. He has commanded you to ask from Him so that He may give you, and to request Him to have mercy on you so that He may shower His mercy on you.

He has not placed anyone between you and Him to veil you from Him, nor has he compelled you to one who would intercede with Him on your behalf. He does not prevent you from repentance were you to commit a sin, nor does He hasten you to punishment. He does not embarrass you {because of it} when you deserve to be embarrassed, nor does He show strictness in accepting your repentance. He does not object on you if you committed a wrong, nor does He despair you of {His} mercy.

Rather, he has regarded your abstention from sin to be a good deed. He counts your evil deed as one, but he counts your good deed as ten. He has opened for you the door of

.repentance and the door of propitiation

When you call Him, He listens to your call, and when you whisper to Him, He is aware of your whisper. Thus, you inform Him of your need, unveil before Him what is in your heart, complain to Him of your worries, beseech Him to remove your troubles, seek His help in your affairs, and ask from the treasuries of His mercy that which no one .other than Him is able to give, of long life, sound health and abundance in sustenance

Then He put in your hand the keys of His treasuries by allowing you to ask from Him. So whenever you wished, you opened the doors of His blessings through supplication and invoked the shower of His mercy. Thus, delay in His response should not disappoint you, because that which is granted is according to the intention {of the (supplicant}."(١

According to a Divine Narration (hadith al-qudsi), "O My servants! All of you are in error except for him whom I have guided. So ask guidance from Me, I will guide you. And all of you are poor except him whom I have enriched. So ask Me for richness, I will .provide you. And all of you are sinful except for him whom I have protected

So plead for My forgiveness, I will forgive you... If the first and the last of you, and the living and the dead of you, were to come together and each of them were to ask Me whatever he

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.Nahj al-Balaghah, letter no.۳۱ -۱

wished and I were to grant him his wish, yet this would not affect My kingdom... When I decide on a matter, all that I say to it is: 'Be' and it is."(1)

Obstacles of the Second Kind

Obstacles belonging to the second category are many. Some of the time, the acceptance of a prayer might be detrimental to the supplicant and he might not be aware of this; but Allah, the Exalted, knows his condition better than himself, and He knows what is good for him and what is bad.

At other times, the quick acceptance of a prayer might be harmful for the supplicant, and Allah knows best that the delay in the response is better and more beneficial for him, so He withholds its acceptance for sometime, without nullifying or rejecting the prayer.

A phrase in the supplication of al-iftitah says: "So I became habituated to call You trustingly and ask You familiarly, neither fearing nor scared, pointing out to You that because of which I turned toward You. Then if there was a delay {in Your response}, I would blame You due to my ignorance, {whereas} perhaps the delay was the best for me, for You know the outcome of all affairs."

Sometimes, Allah, the Exalted, may delay in responding to the prayer of His servant so that he may prolong his standing (qiyam) and pleading before Him; as Allah loves the prolonged standing and entreating of His servant before Him. According to a Divine Narration, Allah said to Prophet Musa ('a), "O

1- Tafsir al-Imam, pg.۱۹ ۲۰; and Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۹۳, pg.۲۹۳.

Musa, I am not neglectful of My creatures, but I love My angels to listen to the cry of (supplication {rising} from My servants."(1)

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) is narrated to have said: "{It so happens that} a servant makes supplication and Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, says to the two angels, 'I have indeed answered him, but confine him to his need, for I love listening to his voice.' And {at times} a servant makes a petition and Allah, the Blessed, the Exalted, says: 'Grant (his need quickly, for I hate his voice."(2)

However, even if the acceptance of a prayer is detrimental for the supplicant, Allah, the Exalted, does not absolutely annul the response to his prayer. Rather, He transforms it to be the expiation (kaffarah) of his sins and a means of forgiveness; or converts it to a provision for him in this world; or grants him, instead, lofty stations in .the Heaven

Here we will mention three narrations from the Holy Prophet (S) and Imam 'Ali ('a) regarding the two situations mentioned above in brief, that is, substitution (tabdil) and .(delay (ta'jil

Delay and Substitution in the Acceptance of a Prayer

The Holy Prophet (S) is narrated to have said, "No Muslim calls on Allah, the Glorious, provided that his prayer has not been made for severing the ties of kinship or committing a sin, except that Allah shall grant him one of the three things; either He will quickly grant his prayer, or He will delay it, or He will avert calamity from him of its

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۱- Uddat ud-Da'i'.

۲- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, kitab as-Salat, abwab al-du'a', bab no.۲۱, hadith no.۳.

like.” “O Messenger of Allah, we will increase {in praying} in this case”, said his (companions. He (S) replied, “{Indeed} do increase.”(١)

He (S) is also reported to have said, “Prayer (du’a’) is the essence of worship. There is no believer who prays to Allah but that He responds to him; either He quickly grants it to him in this world, or delays it to the Hereafter, or forgives from his sins to the extent (that he has prayed to him, so long as he does not pray for a sin.”(٢)

In his will to his son al-Hasan (‘a), according to the narration of Sharif ar-radiyy, Imam :‘Ali (‘a) says

Thus, delay in His response should not disappoint you, because that which is granted“ is according to the intention {of the supplicant}. Some of the time, the response might be delayed so that it may greatly increase in the reward of the supplicant and cause .{ample bounties for the hopeful {in Allah

At other times, you may ask for a thing but it is not given to you, and a better thing is given to you, sooner or later, or it will be taken away from you for some greater good of your’s; because you may have asked for a thing in which there is destruction of your religion, were it to be given to you. So let your request be for things whose beauty remains for you and whose evil consequences are averted from you. Wealth is not going

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.Wasa’il al-Shi’ah, vol.۴, pg.۱۰۸۶, hadith no.۸۶۱۷ -۱

Wasa’il al-Shi‘ah, kitab as-Salat, abwab al-du’a’, bab no.۱۵, and vol.۴, pg.۱۰۸۶, hadith -۲ .no.۸۶۱۸

(to remain for you nor are you going to remain for it."(1)

If we were to closely examine the above narrations, we would come across the following five cases as far as the acceptance of a prayer is concerned:

1. Quick response (ta'jil) to the need for which the supplicant has prayed to Allah.

2. Delay (ta'jil) in the response to his prayer.

3. Substitution (tabdil) in the response. This is by warding off evil from the supplicant, if responding to his prayer is not to his benefit.

4. Substitution in the response by conferring upon him lofty stations, blessings and rewards in the Hereafter, if answering the need of the supplicant is not to his benefit.

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) says: "Allah will transform the prayer of the believers on the Day of Resurrection into an action which will increase {in their stations} in the Heaven."(2)

In another narration, Imam al-Baqir ('a) is related to have said, "By Allah, that which Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, delays in granting the believers of what they ask from this world, is better for them than that which He quickly grants them from it."(3)

5. Substitution in the response by forgiving his sins and wrongdoings, if the response to his prayer is not to his benefit.(4)

Nonetheless, substitution and delay in the response (istijabah) may not only be to the benefit of the supplicant alone, rather it may also be to the benefit of the entire system which surrounds the supplicant as well as others. Accordingly, granting his

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1- Nahj al-Balaghah, letter no.۳۱.

2- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.۱۰۸۶, hadith no.۸۶۱۵.

3- Qurb al-Isnad, pg.۱۷۱; and Usul al-Kafi, pg.۵۲۶.

4- The last three cases are peculiar to the situation when the prayer of a servant is absolutely annulled. However, at times, Allah, the Exalted, may answer the prayer of

his servant together with forgiving his sins, warding off evil from him and granting him .lofty stations in the Hereafter

need or responding to his prayer quickly would result in a disturbance in the system which Allah, the Exalted, has decreed for the human species in particular, or in the .system which He has ordained for the universe in its entirety

Transformation of a Prayer into Deed

Prayer and action (‘amal) are two different things. Each of them is among the stations of Allah’s mercy. Putting effort attracts the mercy of Allah as much as prayer (du’a’) .attracts His mercy

:Allah, the Exalted, says

(And say, ‘Go on working, Allah will see your conduct and His apostle…”(١“

:In another verse in the Qur’an, Allah says

(So whoever does an atom’s weight of good will see it.”(٢“

:Prayer also is among the keys of mercy, as the Qur’anic verse says

(Call Me, I will answer you.”(٣“

Nevertheless, not everything that man prays for can be actualized within the general system of the universe, for one might pray to Allah for something whose occurrence is impossible within the general system (al-qada’ wa al-qadar) operating in the universe. .Accordingly, his prayer {cannot and} would not be answered

At other times, the acceptance of a prayer or quick response to it might not be to the benefit of the supplicant, so what shall be the outcome of all that effort put by the ?supplicant in praying

The answer to this question is that the prayer itself, in the above case, is converted to an action (‘amal) and an act of devotion (‘ibadah) which, in turn, causes Allah’s mercy .to descend on the supplicant

,As a result

۱- Qur'an, ۹:۱۰۵.

۲- Qur'an, ۹۹:۷.

۳- Qur'an, ۴۰:۶۰.

the Divine decree and destiny (al-qada' wa al-qadar) is not a barrier to the acceptance of a prayer. This is because if Allah, the Exalted, does not answer the prayer of His servant, then He would convert it to a good deed and reward the supplicant for it in this world and the Hereafter.

There are indications in the Islamic sources to this subtle concept of the "transformation of a prayer into good deed".

Hammad bin 'Isa narrates from Imam as-Sadiq ('a), "I heard him say, 'Supplicate, and do not say that the matter has been decided(1); for indeed supplication is the {only} worship ('ibadah).'"(2)

In another tradition(3), Imam as-Sadiq ('a) says: "Pray to Him, and do not say the matter has been decided, for indeed supplication is the {only} worship. Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, says: 'Indeed those who are disdainful of My worship will enter hell in utter humility.'(4)"

The Relation between Prayer and the Response

We mentioned earlier that the first kind of obstacles is impossible in relation to Allah, the Exalted. As for the second kind, it is a reality prevalent in the lives of human beings and their prayers. It is due to this fact that sometimes Allah, the Exalted, delays in responding to the prayer of His servant, and, at times, makes a substitution in the response.

In other than these two situations, the acceptance of a prayer is certain. This 'certainty' stems from the indubitable judgement of man's innate disposition (fitrah), so long as an asker is in need and desperate of the

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۱- That is, this matter is among the cases of Divine decree and destiny which cannot be penetrated and altered by supplication (du'a').

۲- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol. ۴, pg. ۱۰۹۲, hadith no.۸۶۴۳; and Usul al-Kafi, pg. ۵۱۶.

۳- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.۱۰۹۲, hadith no.۸۶۴۵; and al-Kafi, al-furu', vol.۱, pg.۹۴.

.Qur’an, ۴۰:۶۰ -۴

one-asked, and the one-asked is capable of fulfilling his need, and is not miser in .relation to his creatures

This definite relation between prayer and response has been affirmed by the Qur'an :as well.(1) He, the Exalted, says

۱. "Is not He who answers the call of the distressed {person} when he invokes Him and removes his distress..."(2)

According to this verse, a distressed person needs only to invoke Allah for his prayer to be answered and his distress to be removed (...when he invokes Him...). So if he prays to Him in such a state, then Allah will undoubtedly answer his prayer and .remove the distress from him

۲. "Your Lord has said: 'Call Me, I will answer you.' Indeed those who are disdainful of My worship will enter hell in utter humility."(3)

This verse is crystal clear in showing the relation between prayer (du'a') and its .acceptance (Call Me, I will answer you)

۳. "...I answer the supplicant's call when he calls Me."(4)

The definitive nature of the relation between prayer and the response is clear and expilcit from this category of verses in the Qur'an. These verses negate any kind of doubt from the heart about the certainty of the response from Allah to every prayer, so long as its acceptance is not detrimental to the supplicant, or to the general system of which the caller is a part. Moreover, the acceptance of a prayer in these verses is .not conditional or dependent on anything else

As for the conditions which we

۱- The definitive nature of this relation should not imply that Allah is obliged to answer a prayer by this very relation. Rather, He, the Glorious, has made mercy incumbent

upon Himself, "…Say, 'Peace to you! Your Lord has made mercy incumbent upon (Himself…" (Qur'an, ۶:۵۴

.Qur'an, ۲۷:۶۲ -۲

.Qur'an, ۴۰:۶۰ -۳

.Qur'an, ۲:۱۸۶ -۴

are going to talk about in chapter two of this book, they are in fact conditions necessary either for the realization and confirmation of the prayer (du'a'), or for the benefit of the supplicant himself, without which the du'a' will lack effect or become null and void.

In conclusion, the relation between prayer and its acceptance is of a definitive nature which does not vary. It is an unconditional relation which cannot be suspended on anything else. Any condition in this regard is one which affirms and realizes the state (halat) of prayer, as the verse says:

"...when he invokes Him and removes {his} distress...(۱)

The Islamic sources, the narrations of the Holy Prophet (S) and his Progeny, entail what confirms and deepens this relation between prayer and its acceptance. A Divine Narration says: "O 'Isa! Indeed I am the best of the listeners; I answer the supplicants when they call Me."(۲)

The Holy Prophet (S) says in a tradition, "No servant {of Allah} walking in a valley stretches out the palms of his hands, remembering Allah and invoking Him, except that Allah will fill that valley with virtues, whether the valley is big or small."(۳)

In another tradition, Imam as-Sadiq ('a) is reported to have said, "If a servant {of Allah} were to shut his mouth and not supplicate, he would not be given anything. So ask, you will be given."(۴)

Maysir bin 'Abd al-'Aziz narrates from Imam as-Sadiq ('a), "O Maysir! Indeed there is no door which is knocked at

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۱- Qur'an, ۲۷:۶۲.

۲- Usul al-Kafi.

۳- Thawab al-A'mal, pg.۱۳۷.

۴- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.۱۰۸۴, hadith no.۸۶۰۶.

(but that it is about to be opened for the one who knocks it."(1)

Imam 'Ali ('a) is reported to have said, "If you consistently knock at the door {of Allah's mercy}, it shall be opened for you."(2)

In his advice to Amir al-Mu'minin ('a), the Holy Prophet (S) said, "O 'Ali! I advise you to supplicate (du'a'), for it is {always accompanied} with the response (ijabah)."(3)

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) says: "If anyone of you is inspired with prayer (du'a') at the time of affliction, then know that the {duration of the} affliction is short."(4)

In another tradition, Imam as-Sadiq ('a) says: "Nay, by Allah, no one earnestly invokes Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, except that Allah will respond to him."(5)

In a Divine Narration (hadith al-qudsi), Allah, the Exalted, says: "My servant has not been fair to Me; {when} he calls Me, I feel ashamed to reject {his prayer}, {but} he disobeys Me and is not {even} ashamed of Me."(6)

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) has said, "No servant {of Allah} stretches out his hand toward Allah, the All-mighty, the All-compeller, except that He, the All-mighty, the Majestic, feels ashamed to reject {his prayer}."(7)

According to another Divine Narration, "Whosoever relieves himself (ahdatha) and then performs ablution and performs prayers (salat) and {thereafter} calls Me, then if I do not answer him in relation to what he has asked me of his religious or worldly affair, then I have disregarded him; but I am not a contemptuous (jafin) Lord."(8)

Imam 'Ali ('a) says: "Allah

۱- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.۱۰۸۵, hadith no.۸۶۱۱.

۲- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.۱۰۸۵, hadith no.۸۶۱۳.

۳- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, kitab as-Salat, abwab al-du'a', bab no.۲, hadith no.۱۸.

۴- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol. ۴, pg. ۱۰۸۷, ḥadith no.۸۶۲۴.

۵- Usul al-Kafi, kitab al-du’a’, bab al-ilhah fi al-du’a’, hadith no.۵.

۶- Irshad al-Qulub of al-Daylami.

۷- Uddat ud-Da’i; and Wasa’il al-Shi’ah, kitab as-Salat, abwab al-du’a’, bab no.۴, hadith no.۱.

۸- Irshad al-Qulub of al-Daylami.

would not open the door of supplication {for a person} and {then} close on him the (door of acceptance (ijabah)."(1)

In another tradition, Imam 'Ali ('a) is narrated to have said, "He who is given {the (opportunity to make} supplication will not be deprived of the response."(2)

In the last two narrations there is a meaningful indication containing an 'alawi breath, and that is that Allah, the Exalted, is generous and trustworthy. So if He opens the door of prayer for anyone, then it is not possible that He would shut on him the door of acceptance. Also, if He facilitates (tawfiq) for His servant to supplicate Him, then He .will not deprive him of the response

The Holy Prophet (S) is related to have said, "The door of supplication (du'a') has not been opened for anyone but that the door of acceptance is {also} opened for him. So if the door of prayer is opened for any one of you, then he should strive; for Allah (never gets tired {of listening to His servant}."(3)

This was the third station among the stations of Allah's mercy. O Allah, we heard Your .message, bore witness to it and have believed in it

The Three Stations of Mercy

In the story of Lady Hajar and her son Prophet Isma'il ('a), and also in the story of the father of the prophets, Ibrahim ('a), we come across a remarkable and unique scene .wherein all the three stations of mercy are seen at one place

These stations are: poverty (hajat) and

۱- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, kitab as-Salat, abwab al-du'a', bab no.۲, hadith no.۱۲; and vol.۴, .pg.۱۰۸۷, hadith no. ۸۶۲۴

۲- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, kitab as-Salat, abwab al-du'a', bab no.۲; and vol.۴, pg.۱۰۸۶, hadith .no.۸۶۲۲

۳- .Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.۱۰۸۷, hadith no.۸۶۲۴

need (faqr), prayer (du'a') and request (su'al), and endeavour (sa'y) and movement .((harakah

The story took place when Prophet Ibrahim ('a) left his wife, Lady Hajar, in a barren :valley together with her infant baby, Isma'il ('a). Then he said

Our Lord! I have settled part of my descendants in a barren valley, by Your sacred" House, our Lord, that they maintain the prayer (salat). So make the hearts of a part of the people fond of them, and provide them with fruits, that they may give thanks."(۱)

Prophet Ibrahim ('a), the friend of Allah, then went away on the order of Allah, leaving alone this woman and her baby in that desert valley by the command of Allah. The little water they had finished, and the infant was struck by thirst and overwhelmed by .it. The mother came up in search of water but could not find any trace of it

The infant started crying, hitting the ground with his hands and feet, while the mother ran here and there. She would go up the hill of safa looking at the far away horizon in search of water. She would then come down and run in search of water toward the hill of marwah, praying to Allah to grant them water in that barren valley, while the infant was screaming and weeping, and hitting his hands and feet on the ground by the .sacred House

Suddenly, Allah, the Exalted, made a spring to gush forth under the feet of

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.Qur'an, ۱۴:۳۷ -۱

the infant. The mother quickly ran toward the water so that she may give drink to her suckling baby and stop the water from going waste. She was saying to the water as .”she raised a basin to collect it: “zam…zam

This astonishing event attracted the mercy of Allah on that particular day. He, the Exalted, brought forth the spring of zamzam in a barren land and made it to be a .source of many blessings in that Holy Land

This event was later made by Allah to be part of the practices of hajj and He gave it a .place in one of the noble Islamic obligations decreed by Him

Now, what is the secret hidden in this event? Why has it been given so much significance in {our} religion and has been made part of the hajj rituals? What is the main reason which attracted the mercy of Allah so strongly in this event, such that He ?made it a source of many blessings for the generations of the monotheists

There must be a secret behind this event which necessitated Allah’s mercy in that barren valley, and caused the continuation of this mercy and its permanence, and which led it to be entered in the hajj rituals of the generations of monotheists .(muwahhidin) by the Sacred House

I believe -and Allah best knows the secrets of this incident- that this unique incident entailed three stations of Allah’s mercy on that particular day, each of which is .effective in attracting His mercy

The

first station is the need (al-hajat) which is embodied in the thirst which was harming the suckling baby. Indeed indigence and need to Allah are among the stations of .Allah's mercy

The more the need is injurious to a person, the closer he shall be to the mercy of Allah. That is why we find that the infants are much closer to Allah's mercy, when they are struck with pain, hunger, thirst, cold or heat, than the adults who are able to endure it; .as the need in case of the babies does more harm to them than to the adults

A phrase in one of the supplications reads as follows, "O Allah, give me because of my neediness." Neediness to Allah alone is enough to attract His mercy. The greater the .need to Allah, the more effective it shall be in attracting His mercy

Indigence puts a person at the doorstep of Allah's mercy and takes him closer to it, whether he is aware of his neediness toward Him or not, though one's awareness of the need increases it in its value and in its effectiveness in attracting Allah's mercy, as mentioned earlier. However, this is so long as one does not pervert the 'need' (faqr) from its meaning, by thinking that it implies need toward wealth or the vanities of this world or some of the servants of Allah, instead of comprehending the reality of the .need, which is one's neediness toward Allah

There is indeed a great difference

between these two kinds of indigence. That which attracts Allah’s mercy is the need (faqr) toward Him. Consequently, when a person perverts this kind of indigence, from the ‘need to Allah’ to the ‘need to His creatures’, then the ‘need’ loses its value in attracting Allah’s mercy. Unfortunately, the need of the people, for most of the time, is .of this kind and not of the kind of the need toward Allah

Now, in the above mentioned incident, the cry and scream of the baby due to severe thirst is an effective scene for attracting Allah’s mercy. Among the scenes of indigence and need toward Allah, there is no scene more touching and effective in attracting Allah’s mercy than the one in which a baby is burning of thirst and the mother cannot .find water for her

The second station of Allah’s mercy in this incident is the ‘endeavour’ (sa’y). One of the conditions for attaining provision (rizq) is to strive, as there is no provision without putting effort. Allah, the Exalted, has made endeavour and movement in man’s life a .key to His provision

If the element of need (faqr) requires man to be in the state of desperation and want, then the element of endeavour demands from him determination (‘azm), firmness, strong-will (iradah), movement and activity. It is in accordance with man’s efforts, .activity and determination that Allah would grant him of His mercy

In the above incident, Lady Hajar, the mother of Prophet Isma’il, put effort to search for water as

they were running short of it and her baby was overcome by thirst. She would go up the hill of safa looking for water at the farthest horizon, come down and move toward the hill of marwah in search of it. Although she did not find water, she did not despair and repeated her search, going up and coming down, from safa to marwah and vice-versa, seven times.

Had it not been for the 'hope' in her, she would have ceased to struggle right after her first attempt. But the hope with which her heart was filled persuaded her every time to go in search of water another time, until Allah delivered them by bringing forth the spring of zamzam under Isma'il 's feet. Nevertheless, her hope was in Allah and not in her efforts, otherwise she would have despaired right in her first or second attempt.

Allah, the Exalted, has decreed such an endeavour and activity to be a condition for His provision and for the descent of His mercy on man. No doubt that it is Allah, the Exalted, who bestows upon His servants and sends down His mercy on them. But He has so willed that man's endeavour and efforts be the key to His provision and mercy.

The third station of Allah's mercy in this incident is the prayer of Lady Hajar, her total absorption in Allah (inqita' ila allah), and her being in desperate need (idtirar) of Him in searching for water in that barren

.land

The more one's detachment from all other than Allah during prayer, the nearer he is to the mercy of Allah. I do not know in which state among the states of 'total absorption in Allah' this righteous lady was in during those moments in that deserted valley, with no animal or human being beside her, while her only baby was burning with thirst and about to breathe her last.

This lady had completely turned toward Allah alone during that critical moment such that even the angels began praying to Allah, joining their voices and prayers to that of her's. If all the people were to attain the like of this state of total absorption in Allah, "they would surely have drawn nourishment from above them and from beneath their feet"(۱), and Allah's mercy would have embraced all of them.

Peace be upon you, O our mother! Isma'il is among your sons whom Allah endowed with light (nur), guidance (huda), belief (Iman), and prophethood (nubuwwah), and he is among those who have been guided aright. Were it not for your loneliness in that deserted and barren valley during the midday heat of Hijaz(۲), and were it not for that suffering and difficulty, you would have not attained the like of the state of total absorption in Allah which you attained during that difficult situation, on the hills of safa and marwah.

And were it not for this detachment from all other than Allah, His mercy would not have embraced you and

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۱- Qur'an, ۵:۶۶.

۲- The Arabian Peninsula. {Trns}

your child. And had it not been for this mercy, your total absorption in Allah and endeavour between safa and marwah would not have become part of Allah's sacraments (sha'a'ir) in hajj.

"Indeed Safa and Marwah are among Allah's sacraments. So whoever makes hajj to the House, or performs the 'umrah there is no sin upon him to circuit between them. Should anyone do good of his own accord, then Allah is indeed appreciative, All-knowing."(١)

O our mother! Allah has engraved in the memory of history your total absorption in Him in that midday heat, and your endeavour in search of water, and the cry of your infant Isma'il, so that people after you may know how to present themselves before Allah and plead for His mercy.

Indeed Allah's mercy is all-embracing. There is no niggardliness, defect, or inability with regard to His mercy. But it is the people who are unaware of the places of His mercy and its stations, and are not acquainted with the correct way of beseeching His mercy and to benefit from it.

We have come to learn from you, O our mother, how to invoke for the stations of Allah's mercy and how to present ourselves for it. From you, O our mother, have we taken the keys of mercy.

But we apologize, O our mother, if we, your children, could not preserve these keys which you handed to Isma'il after yourself, and which were thereafter inherited by the descendents of Isma'il, and which eventually

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١- Qur'an, ٢:١٥٨.

reached us from your son, Muhammad, the Prophet of Allah (S) . We lost them as we lost the other heritage and legacy of the prophets.

We learned from our father, Ibrahim, how to profess the Oneness of Allah (tawhid), and we learnt from our mother, Hajar, how to implore Allah. But we lost both of them due to our indulgence in lowly desires.

Help us, O Allah, to regain what we have lost of the heritage of our father Ibrahim and our mother Hajar, and make us among the members of their family, and do not oust us from this holy house, from the family of Ibrahim and 'Imran.

"Indeed Allah chose Adam and Nuh, and the progeny of Ibrahim and the progeny of 'Imran above all the nations; some of them are descendents of the others, and Allah is All-hearing, All-knowing."(١)

"Our Lord, make us submissive to you, and {raise} from our progeny a nation submissive to you, and show us our rites {of worship}, and turn to us clemently. Indeed You are the All-clement, the All-merciful."(٢)

On that day, our mother employed in that barren and burning valley all the means of goodness; endeavour, supplication, and displaying neediness.

She would sometimes go up safa in search of water, and at other times up marwah; as Allah loves movement and endeavour from His servants, and has made it among the most important requisites for attaining provision (rizq).

But at the same time, she was absolutely detached from all other than Allah in

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١- Qur'an, ٣:٣٣ ٣٤.

٢- Qur'an, ٢:١٢٨.

her endeavour, praying and invoking Him alone in that situation, the like of which is to .be rarely found in the history of mankind

Neither did her putting effort and struggling veil her from Allah and cut her off from Him, nor did her complete absorption in Allah (inqita') hinder her from activity and exerting effort in search of water, as much as a woman could have done in that barren valley and under that scorching midday heat, in seven rounds from safa to .marwah and vice-versa

Today in the sacraments (sha'a'ir) of the hajj, we take these rounds between these two hills without experiencing any difficulty, suffering, trouble, or distress, still we get tired and this activity exhausts us. While our mother, Hajar, performed this activity in that barren valley and under that midday heat, while she was thirsty, drained of all her strength and her suckling baby was about to breathe her last. Yet she carried out this activity in search of water with firmness, resolution, determination and strong-.will

But with all that, this endeavour did not cut her off or veil her from Allah even for a moment. Rather, she was continuously in contact with Allah and detached from all other than Him during whole of this tenacious endeavour. Thus, she bound her endeavour to achieve a worldly affair with complete absorption in Allah, and vice ?verse. Who among us is able to do such a thing

.The angels were, at this stage, looking at her in amazement

How could she attain such a perfect detachment from all other than Allah?! How could she tenaciously look after water when she was encumbered with pain and difficulties?! How could she so supremely combine her endeavour with total absorption in Allah?! So they all raised their cries to Allah to answer her prayer and efforts, and that her endeavour and prayer may attract Allah's mercy, and that she .may attain proximity to Allah's mercy

A beam of prayer and good deed ascended on that day from the earth to the heavens, and a beam of mercy descended from the heavens to the earth. The earth was connected to the heavens and the heavens to the earth. The crowd of angels raised their cries to Allah, pleading with Him, as they witnessed this unique event. And all of a sudden that which had never entered any thought or imagination happened; a spring of clear, cool and pleasant water gushed forth under the feet of the suckling .baby

Glory be to Allah! All praise is due to Allah! He eventually answered her call and endeavour, but not at the place she had put her efforts, rather under the feet of the suckling baby who was at that time hitting the ground with her hands and feet, out of severe thirst. This was for her to know that Allah alone is the one who blessed her in that barren and burning valley with the cool and pleasant water, and it was not she

who actualized that by her efforts and activity, though it was necessary for her to struggle in order for Allah to bless her with zamzam.

Accordingly, He made zamzam to gush forth under the feet of the suckling baby and He raised His sacred House in that valley. He blessed zamzam and made it a source of providing water to hajj pilgrims for generations to come. He engraved this activity and prayer in the memory of history and made it a sacrament among the sacraments (sha'a'ir) of hajj, so that the pilgrims may follow her example every year and send salutations from a distance to their mother, Hajar, and to their fathers, Ibrahim and Isma'il ('a).

In conclusion, three means of Allah's mercy had come together in that barren valley on that particular day; neediness (faqr), endeavour (sa'y) and prayer (du'a'); neediness at the farthest level of weakness (da'f) and lack (faqah); endeavour accompanied with firmness, resolution and determination; and prayer in the state of desperation (idtirar) and detachment (inqita') from all other than Allah.

Every year during hajj we revive the memory of this great event, so that we may learn from our mother, the mother of Isma'il ('a), how to beseech and attract Allah's mercy and bounties.

Etiquettes and Requisites of Supplication

point

Some of our associates (ashabuna) have narrated from Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq ('a) saying, "I said to him, 'There are two verses in the Book of Allah whose interpretation I do not know.'

He said, 'Which verses are they?'

I said, 'The verse which

’.says: “Call Me, I will answer you”; I pray but I do not see the response

’?So he said to me, ‘Do you think that Allah did not keep His word

.No’, I replied‘

’?He said, ‘Why is it so then

’.I replied, ‘I do not know

’?Then he said, ‘Which is the other verse

I said, ‘The verse “…And He will repay whatever you may spend”(١), I spend but I do ’.not see any repay

’?He said, ‘Do you think that Allah did not fulfill His promise

’.I replied, ‘No

’?He asked me, ‘Why is it so then

’.I answered, ‘I do not know

Then he said, ‘I will inform you, by the will of Allah. Had you been obedient to Him in that which He has commanded you, and then you were to pray to Him, He would have indeed answered you. But you violate His commands and disobey Him, so He does not .answer you

As for your saying that you spend but do not see any repay, had you acquired wealth through lawful means and spent it in the right way, then no one would spend a penny .except that Allah would repay it to him

And had you called on Him in the appropriate manner, He would answer you, even if ’.you are disobedient

’?{I said, ‘What is the appropriate manner of supplicating {Him

He said, ‘After you have performed your {daily} obligatory prayers, praise Allah and

extol Him, lauding Him as far as you can. {Then} send blessings on the Prophet (S) and exert

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.Qur'an, ۳۴:۳۹ -۱

yourself in sending blessings on him, and testify that he accomplished his mission. .Send blessings on him as much as you can

Then} recall His bounties with you and those with which He has blessed you, and} .what He did {of good} to you, praising and thanking Him for that

Then} confess all your sins and admit them, or those which you remember and} .summarize those which have remained unnoticed by you

Then} repent to Allah for all your sins, with the intention of not repeating them again.} Seek Allah's forgiveness from them by regretting, with true intention, and with fear .and hope

Then} say, 'O Allah, I apologize to you for my wrong deeds. I ask for your} forgiveness and repent to you. So assist me in obeying You, and grant me success in fulfilling what You have made incumbent upon me of all that which pleases You. Indeed I have seen no one who has been able to attain {even} part of Your obedience except that it was through your blessing on him before his obedience. So endow me '.with a blessing through which I may attain your pleasure and Heaven

(Thereafter, pray for your need, I hope that He will not disappoint you, by His will."(۱

:With regard to the etiquettes (adab) of supplication, Imam as-Sadiq ('a) says

Observe the etiquettes of prayer (du'a'), and see who you are calling and how you" are calling, and why you are calling. Realize the greatness of Allah and His magnificence, and know

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.Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۹۳, pg.۳۱۹; Falah as-Sa'il, pg.۳۸ ۳۹; and 'Uddat ud-Da'i, pg.۱۶ -۱

from the bottom of your heart that He is aware of what is in your conscience, knows .your innermost secret, and what transpires in it of the right and wrong

Know the ways of your salvation and destruction, so that you may not pray to Allah for something in which there is your perdition, thinking that your salvation lies in it. Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, says: 'Man prays for ill as {avidly as} he prays for good, and man is overhasty.'(١) Ponder on what you are asking for, and why are you asking .for it

Prayer (du'a') is the responding of your whole to Allah (al-haqq), and the annihilation of the self in gazing at the Lord, and leaving the choice (ikhtiyar) altogether {to Him}, .and the submission of all affairs to Allah, the manifest of it and the occult

If you do not fulfill the requisites of prayer, then do not wait for the response, for indeed He knows the secret and what is still more hidden; and you may pray for something the contrary of which He has come to know from your innermost (secret."(٢

These two narrations point to the requisites (shurut) of the acceptance of a prayer .(and its etiquettes (adab

I was intending to initially talk about the requisites of prayer and thereafter about its etiquettes. But I encountered some difficulties in the demarcation between the requisites (shurut) and the etiquettes (adab), hence, I chose to merge the two .together

Here, I will quickly point

.Qur'an, ١٧:١١ -١

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol.٩٠, pg.٣٢٢ -٢

to a set of requisites and etiquettes related to prayer in the light of the Islamic .narrations

Recognition of Allah .۱

One of the most significant requisites for the acceptance of a prayer is the knowledge of Allah, and belief in His absolute power and strength in actualizing what His servant .asks from Him

The author of ad-durr al-Manthur reports from Ma'adh bin Jabal that the Holy Prophet (S) said, "Had you recognized Allah with the recognition due to Him, your (prayers would have dislodged the mountains."(۱

Regarding the verse 'So let them respond to Me, and let them have faith in Me...'(۲), al-'Ayyashi narrates a tradition in his Tafsir from Imam as-Sadiq ('a), "They should (know that I am capable of granting them what they ask from Me."(۳

At-Tabrasi relates a narration from Imam as-Sadiq ('a) in Majma' al-Bayan under the above verse to the effect that, "'...and let them have faith in Me'(۴) {means} that they should be convinced that I am capable to give them what they have asked for, 'so that "(they may fare rightly.'(۵

It is reported that once Imam as-Sadiq ('a) recited the verse, "Is not He the one who (answers the call of the distressed {person} when he invokes Him..."(۶

"?So he was asked, "Why is it that we invoke but are not answered

Imam ('a) replied, "Because you invoke one whom you do not recognize, and you pray (for what you do not know."(۷

This tradition emphasizes on the importance of the role of the supplicant's awareness 'of 'the object of prayer

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.Al-Mizan, vol.۲, pg.۴۳ -۱

۲- Qur'an, ۲:۱۸۶.

۳- Ibid.

۴- Qur'an, ۲:۱۸۵.

۵- Qur'an, ۲:۱۸۵.

۶- Qur'an, ۲۷:۶۲.

۷- Tafsir as-Safi, pg.۵۷, under verse no.۸۶ of Chapter Two; Iran lithographic edition.

.and of 'the one asked from' in the acceptance of a prayer

In another tradition, Imam as-Sadiq ('a) says: "The Holy Prophet (S) has said, 'Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, says: 'Whoever asks Me, knowing that I am the {only} One who harms and benefits, then I will surely answer him."(۱)

In one of his supplications, Imam 'Ali bin al-Husayn Zayn al-'Abidin ('a) says: "You have lauded Yourself for having no need for Your creatures, and it suits You to have no need for them, and You have attributed to them poverty, and it suits them to be poor toward You. So he who strives to remedy his lack through what is with You and wishes to turn poverty away from himself through You, has sought his need in the most likely place and come to his request from the right quarter." (۲)

Imam 'Ali ('a) says in a whispered prayer (munajat), "Immaculate is He on whom relies every believer, and of whom every denier (jahid) is in need; and no one can become needless except by the grace of what is with Him."(۳)

Imam Zayn al-'Abidin ('a) says in a supplication, "We rise in the morning in Your grasp. Your kingdom and authority contain us and Your will embraces us. We move about by Your command and turn this way and that through Your governing. We own nothing of the affair except what You have decreed and nothing of the good except what You have given."(۴)

We read in the Sahifat al-'Alawiyyah, "Who can do harm

۱- Thawab al-A'mal, pg. ۸۴.

۲- Sahifat As-Sajjadiyyah, supplication no. ۱۳.

۳- Al-Balad al-Amin, pg. ۹۶.

۴- Sahifat As-Sajjadiyyah, supplication no. ۶.

".to You, or fight against You, or be beyond Your reach, or be safe from Your decree

Part of recognition (ma'rifah) is that a supplicant should know that Allah is near to him, nearer than any other thing, and that He is aware of what his soul tempts him to, and that He is nearer to him than his jugular vein, and that He intervenes between him .and his self

:He, the Exalted, says

"When My servants ask you about Me, {tell them that} I am indeed nearmost."(1)

"We are nearer to him than his jugular vein."(2)

"Know that Allah intervenes between between a man and his heart."(3)

Imam 'Ali ('a) says in a supplication, "I seek Your proximity through Your embracing mercy which has embraced all things. My Lord, indeed You see my position and are aware of what is in my conscience, You know my innermost secret, and nothing of my affairs is hidden from You, You are closer to me than my jugular vein."(4)

In his supplication for the day of Friday, he ('a) says: "There is no god but Allah, who answers (al-mujib) the one who invokes Him {even} with the lowest of his voice, who hears (as-Sami') the one who whispers to Him {even} from the innermost of his heart, who is most kind (ar-ra'uf) toward him who entertains hope in Him to remove his distress, who is near (al-qarib) to him who calls on Him to relieve him of his hardship and grief."(5)

In one of his sermons, Imam

۱- Qur'an, ۲:۱۸۶.

۲- Qur'an, ۵۰:۱۶.

۳- Qur'an, ۸:۲۴.

۴- Al-Balad al-Amin, pg.۹۶.

۵- Ibid, pg.۹۳.

Ali ('a) says: "He has taken precedence in highness such that nothing is higher than' Him, and He is so near that nothing is nearer than Him. Neither has His highness distanced Him from any of His creatures, nor has His nearness put them on the same level with Him."(١)

Entertaining a Good Opinion of Allah .٢

To entertain a good opinion (husn al-zann) of Allah is part of the recognition of Allah. Allah, the Exalted, gives to His servants in accordance with their good opinion about Him and their confidence in the vastness of His mercy and generosity.

According to a Divine Narration, "I am as My servant thinks of Me, so let him not think but good of Me."(٢)

The Holy Prophet (S) says: "Invoke Allah while you are confident of the response {{from Him."

Once Allah revealed to Prophet Musa ('a), "Whenever you call Me and ask from Me, I am there to listen to you."(٣)

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) is narrated to have said, "When you pray {to Allah}, turn {to Him} with your heart, and think as if your need (hajat) were at the door."(۴)

He ('a) has also been reported to have said, "When you pray {to Allah}, turn {to Him} with your heart, and then be confident of the response (ijabah)."(۵)

Contrary to this, there is the state of despair (qunut) of Allah's mercy and the acceptance of prayer. This is one of the things which distance man from Allah's mercy. One may pray to Allah for something and He, the Exalted, may

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١- Nahj al-Balaghah, sermon no.۴٩.

٢- Al-Mizan, vol.٢, pg.٣٧.

٣- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.١١٠۵, hadith no.٨٧٠٣.

۴- Usul al-Kafi, pg.۵۱۹; Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.۱۱۰۵, hadith no.۸۷۰۰.

۵- 'Usul al-Kafi, bab al-iqbal-'ala ad-du'a.'

.delay the response because of his own benefit

But since the supplicant is not aware of that while Allah is, he starts entertaining a bad opinion (su' al-zann) of Allah and despairs of His mercy. Hence, this state of despair .would veil him from the mercy of Allah

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) says: "A servant continues to be in {the state of} blessing, hope, and mercy of Allah -the All-mighty, the Majestic, so long as he does not make haste and does not despair and does not discard prayer." He was aksed, "How does one make haste?" He ('a) replied, "By saying, 'I have been praying to Allah since such and such time, but I do not see the response."(۱)

Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Abi Nasr says: "I said to Abu al-Hasan ('a), 'May I be your ransom! I have been praying to Allah for a need since such and such a year, but now something {of disappointment} has penetrated my heart because of the delay {in His '.{response

He ('a) said, 'O Ahmad! Be careful that Shaitan should not have a way to you and make '?you disappointed. Tell me, if I were to tell you something, would you trust my word

I said, 'May I be your ransom! If I do not trust your word, then whose word would I '.trust, as you are the proof (hujjah) of Allah on His creatures

He ('a) said, 'Then be more confident in Allah; for you are on a promise with Him, the

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.Ibid, pg.۵۲۷; and Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.۱۱۰۷, hadith no.۸۷۱۱ -۱

All-mighty, the Majestic. Does not Allah say, 'When My servants ask you about Me, {tell them that} I am indeed nearmost. I answer the supplicant's call when he calls Me', and He has said, 'Do not despair of the mercy of Allah', and He has said, 'But Allah promises you His forgiveness and grace.' Then be confident in Allah more than you are in others, and do not put in your hearts (qulub) but what is good, for He is very forgiving to you.'"(۱)

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) is reported to have said, "When one hastily {prays to Allah} and then goes away, Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, says: 'Does not My servant know that I am the only one who fulfills the needs?"(۲)

Hisham bin Salim reports from Imam as-Sadiq ('a), "There was a gap of fourty years between Allah's word, 'Your supplication has already been granted'(۳) and the seizure of Fir'awn."(۴)

Ishaq bin 'Ammar says: "I asked as-Sadiq ('a), 'Is it possible that a person is granted his prayer but then it is delayed?' 'Yes, {even as long as} twenty years', he replied."(۵)

۳. Being in Need of Allah Desperately

One must take shelter with Allah during prayer like a distressed person who finds none other than Allah to rely upon and place his hope in. If a supplicant's hope is divided between Allah and other than Him of His creatures, then he has not attained a due absorption in Allah (inqita') and has not experienced in himself the state of being desperately in

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۱- Qurb al-Isnad, pg.۱۷۱.
۲- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.۱۱۰۶, hadith no.۸۷۰۹.
۳- Qur'an, ۱۰:۸۹.
۴- Usul al-Kafi, pg.۵۶۲.
۵- Ibid.

.need of Allah (idtirar), which is a fundamental requisite for the acceptance of a prayer

In his will to his son Muhammad al-Hanafiyyah, Imam 'Ali ('a) says: "Deliverance (khalas) is attained only through sincerity (ikhlas). When the {state of} fear intensifies, (then to Allah is the retreat."(١)

This is so because at the time of distress, one loses hope in all other than Allah and takes due resort to Allah, such that he entertains no hope in other than Him, the All-.mighty, the Majestic

It is narrated that Allah once revealed to Prophet 'Isa ('a), "Call Me the calling of one who is engrossed in grief and cannot find any helper. O 'Isa! Ask Me and do not ask other than Me, so that the prayer from you would be favourable and so would be the (response from Me."(٢)

In his Whispered Prayer, Imam 'Ali ('a) says: "O Allah! My request does not resemble the request of the beggars, for if a beggar is deprived, he would cease begging, while I cannot do without that which I have asked from You, in all times. O Allah! Be pleased with me; and if you are not pleased with me, then forgive me; for a master may forgive his servant while he is displeased with him. O Allah! How dare I call You while I (am what I am?! And how dare I despair of You while You are what You are?!"(٣)

This is the state of being in desperate need of Allah in which

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.Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.١١٢١, hadith no.٨٧۶۴ -١

.Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.١١٧۴, hadith no.٨٩۵٨ -٢

.Al-Balad al-Amin, pg.٣١۶ -٣

a servant has no choice but to take refuge with Allah, the Exalted, and obtain his need from Him.

As mentioned earlier, the state of being in dire need of Allah necessitates the state of total absorption in Him. For in such a condition, a servant knows that his need lies only with Allah and not with other than Him. Hence, he would turn to Him alone, averting his face from all other than Him.

Imam 'Ali bin al-Husayn ('a) says in a supplication, "Make me among those who supplicate You with sincerity in ease with the supplication of those who are in distress."(۱)

He says in another place, "O Allah, I showed sincerity by cutting myself off from everything but You. I approached You with my whole self. I averted my face from everyone who needs Your support. I ceased to ask from any one who cannot do without Your bounty. I saw that the needy who seeks from the needy is foolish in his opinion, and misguided in his intellect."(۲)

Nevertheless, this in no way means that one should not employ the material means which Allah Himself has ordained to be the means for the fulfillment of the needs of His creatures, and has also commanded them to do that. Rather, it means that these natural causes are in extension to the will (mashi'ah) of Allah and His command.

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) has said, "If anyone of you wishes that he should not ask his Lord (rabb) for anything except that he should

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۱- Sahifat As-Sajjadiyyah, supplication no.۲۲.

۲- Ibid, supplication no.۲۸.

grant him, then let him despair of all the people and not place his hope but in Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic. If Allah comes to know of this from his heart, then he will not ask from Him for anything except that He will grant him."(1)

4. Entering from the Doors Ordained by Allah

Prayer is turning (iqbal) toward Allah. Thus, it must take place through the ways in which Allah, the Exalted, has ordered.

It has been narrated that a man from the Banu Isra'il worshipped Allah for forty nights and thereafter prayed to Allah but his prayer was not answered. So he complained about this to Prophet 'Isa ('a) who, in turn, inquired from Allah, the Exalted, about this. Allah replied, "O 'Isa! He called Me while he had a doubt about you in his heart."(2)

5. Turning of the Heart to Allah

This is among the other most important requisites for the acceptance of a prayer. This is because the reality of prayer lies in the turning of the heart to Allah. So if the heart becomes occupied with other than Allah, of the wordly distractions, then the supplicant has not been able to actualize the reality of prayer.

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) is reported to have said, "Indeed Allah does not accept the prayer which rises from the back of a heedless (sahin) heart."(3)

He ('a) has also said, "When you invoke {Allah}, turn {to Him} with your heart, and then be confident of the response."(4)

He ('a) again says: "Amir al-Mu'minin ('a) has said, 'Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, does not accept the

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1- Tafsir as-Safi, pg.۵۸, Iran lithographic edition; Usul al-Kafi, pg.۳۸۲; and Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.۱۱۷۴, hadith no.۸۹۵۶.

٢- Kalimat Allah, hadith no.٣٧١.

٣- 'Usul al-Kafi, bab al-iqbal-'ala al-du'a.

٤- Ibid, hadith no.١.

prayer from the back of a negligent (lahin) heart.'"(۱)

A Divine Narration says: "O Musa! Call Me with a pure heart and a truthful tongue."(۲)

In his will to 'Ali ('a), the Holy Prophet (S) says: "Allah does not accept the prayer of a heedless heart."(۳)

Sulaiman bin 'Amru says: "I heard Imam as-Sadiq ('a) saying, 'Allah does not answer the prayer from the posterior of a heedless heart. Thus, when you pray, turn (aqbil) with your heart {toward Him} and then be confident of the response."(۴)

It is has also been narrated from Imam as-Sadiq ('a) that he said, "Allah does not answer the prayer from the back of a hardened (qasin) heart."(۵)

Therefore, the heart of a supplicant must turn toward Allah and be attentive to Him during prayer. Negligence (lahw), heedlessness (sahw) and hardness (qaswah) of the heart are all among the hurdles which stop the heart from attaining the state of turning toward Allah.

While reciting the transmitted supplications(۶) in particular, a reciter must create the state and ambiance of prayer within himself. He must also be cautious of his heart falling behind his tongue, as a result of which his tongue becomes busy with the recitation of the supplication while his heart is engaged with the worldly distractions.

In his valuable and instructional book, al-Muraqabat(۷), the mystic jurist, Shaykh Jawad Maliki Tabrizi (may Allah have mercy on him) says:

"Know that you cannot attain the good of prayer (du'a') and the response (ijabah) to it unless your innermost secret,

p: ۸۸

۱- Ibid, hadith no.۲.

۲- Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۹۳, pg.۳۴.

۳- Man la Yahduruhu al-faqih, vol.۲, pg.۳۳۹.

.Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.۱۱۰۵, hadith no.۸۷۰۵ -۴

.Ibid, vol.۴, pg.۱۱۰۶, hadith no.۸۷۰۷ -۵

By transmitted supplications, we mean the supplications which have reached us -۶ from the Holy Prophet (S) and the A'immah ('a). These supplications are referred to in .Arabic as al-ad'iyat al-ma'thurah

.Pg.۶۰ ۶۱ -۷

your spirit and your heart are qualified (ittisaf) by the properties (sifat) of prayer. Qualification by its properties means that the originator of the prayer should be your .innermost secret, spirit and heart

For instance, when you say {addressing Allah}, 'I place my hope (raja') in You for every good', your innermost secret, spirit and heart should entertain hope in Allah. Thereafter, its effects should become manifest in your actions. He in whose innermost secret and essence the 'hope' is actualized, then it is just as if his whole becomes {an embodiment of} hope. And if this is actualized in his spirit, then it is as if he lives with hope. And he who is hopeful with his heart, then the actions he performs .of his own volition shall always be accompanied by hope

So beware that none of your affairs should be devoid of hope, and consider that to be {part of} your actions. Then see, do you find in your activities the effect of hope, ?which is the act of seeking (talab), or not

Have you not heard the speech of the Ma'sum ('a), "Whoever is hopeful of something seeks it?" And this is how it is; because you find the people of this world who are hopeful of the worldly affairs, if they hope for good from someone or something, they would seek it from that person or thing to the extent of their hope. Do not you see that a trader never leaves his trade, or a craftsman

.his industry? All this is because they are anticipating good in the trade and industry

Similarly, every group seeks what it anticipates from that in which they find their object of hope, and do not leave it until after they have acquired it, except {surprisingly} for him who is hopeful of the Heaven (jannah) and the Hereafter, and except for him who is hopeful of the grace and kindness of Allah, as is the case most !of the time. But such a thing is impossible

The fact that the effects (athar) follow their properties(١) is among the things ordained by Allah, the Wise; and you will find no change in the norm (sunnah) of Allah. Rather, the violation(٢) (takhalluf) is due to the mistaking of the illusion (da'wa) for the reality (haqiqah), otherwise, there is not a little hope except that there is with it the .like of it of the act of asking (talab), and so on

The same applies to other elements of prayer, apart from hope, such as tasbih(٣), tahlil(۴), tahmid(۵), tadarru'(۶), istikanah(٧), khawf(٨), istighfar(٩) and tawbah(١٠). Each of these has a reality and an illusion, and the effect belongs to the reality, without any ".violation

۶. Humiliation and Softening the Heart

If a supplicant wishes his prayer to be accepted then he must seek tender-heartedness (riqqat al-qalb) and try to soften his heart; for when the heart becomes tender it opens up, and the veils between the supplicant and Allah are lifted and he is .nearer to Allah

The mode of prayer and request has

١- For instance, the 'act of seeking' is the natural consequence of the property of {.hope, when it is realized in the heart of a person. {Trns

٢- That is, if we find a property without the effect expected of it.

٣- Glorification of Allah: subhan allah.

۴- Pronouciation of the phrase la ilaha illa allah.

۵- Praising Allah: al-hamd li allah.

۶- Pleading with Allah.

۷- To become lowly before Allah.

۸- Fear of Allah.

۹- Seeking Allah's forgiveness.

۱۰- Repenting to Allah.

an effect on the softening of the heart. The narrations that put emphasis on self-abasement (tadhallul) during prayer are, in fact, for the purpose of actualizing this end.

In his book 'Uddat ud-Da'i, Ahmad bin Fahd al-Hilli narrates that the Holy Prophet (S) would look like a beggar asking for food when he invoked Allah and prayed to Him.

It is reported that among the things Allah, the Exalted, revealed to Prophet Musa ('a) was, "O Musa! Stretch your hands before Me in humility like a humble servant calling his master for help. If you did that, you will be showered with mercy, as I am the Most Kind of those who are kind and powerful."(١)

Muhammad bin Muslim says: "I inquired from Abu Ja'far al-Baqir ('a) about the verse '…Yet they neither humbled themselves to their Lord, nor did they entreat Him {for mercy}.'(٢) He ('a) replied, 'Humbling oneself (istikanah) means humility (khudu'), while entreaty (tadarru') means raising up the two hands in imploration."(٣)

Since the purpose behind this particular mode of prayer had not been clear for the people, the sceptics were putting people in doubt as to the mode of supplication. They would say: why do we raise our hands toward the skies? Is Allah in the skies that we should raise our hands toward it?

For this reason, the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) used to explain to them that Allah, the Exalted, is present everywhere, but we take up this particular mode of prayer as a mark of our

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١- 'Uddat ud-Da'i, pg.١٣٩.

٢- Qur'an, ٢٣:٧٦.

٣- Usul al-Kafi, vol.٢, pg.٣٤٨.

humility and neediness toward Allah; for raising the two hands is a sign of humility and indigence. This mark has an inspiring effect in the softening of the heart, removing hardness from it, clearing it up and drawing its attention to Allah, the Blessed, the Exalted.

At-Tabrasi narrates in al-Ihtijaj that once Abu Qurrah asked Imam ar-Rida ('a), "Why is it that when you supplicate you raise your hands toward the sky? Abu al-Hasan ('a) replied, 'Allah has sought servanthood ('ubudiyyah) from His creatures through different forms of worship... and He has sought servanthood from His creatures during prayer (du'a'), request and imploration, by {asking them} to stretch their hands and raise them toward the sky, displaying their humility as a sign of servanthood and abasement before Him."(۱)

In fact, the moment of the softening of the heart is the very moment of the descent of Allah's mercy. So one should avail such moments by turning his attention to Allah for supplication; for the mercy of Allah is without any reckoning during such moments. However, this should not imply that there is a specified time for the coming down of Allah's mercy. Rather, the receiving of this mercy has a specified time and a particular state, the state of tenderness (riqqah).

The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said, "Avail yourself of the opportunity of prayer (du'a') at the softening {of the heart}; for it(۲) is a mercy."(۳)

Abu Basir narrates from Imam as-Sadiq ('a), "If {the heart of} anyone of

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۱- Usul al-Kafi, pg.۵۲۲; and Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.۱۱۰۱, hadith no.۸۶۸۷.

۲- The softening of the heart (al-riqqah).

۳- Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۹۳, pg.۳۱۳.

you becomes softened, then let him pray; for the heart does not soften until it has become pure."(1)

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) has also said, "When your skin quivers and your eyes shed tears, then you have drawn closer! Your need has been considered."(2)

This narration is precise; for according to it the acceptance of a prayer has direct connection with the state (halat) of the supplicant. The more humble and softer the heart becomes, the closer the supplicant will be to the response. On the contrary, the harsher and harder it becomes, the further he will be from the response.

The Islamic narrations highlight the importance of availing the moments of the softening of the heart and when one is broken-hearted -as a result of the hardships and distress in this world- for turning toward Allah, the Exalted, through prayer and request.

These moments prepare one to turn toward Allah and receive His mercy. The secret behind all this lies in the fact that the heart cannot acquire the state of turning to Allah (iqbal) and that of receiving his mercy (istiqbal) except when it softens. Thus, the acquisition of the state of softening of the heart (riqqah) is necessary for one who desires the face of Allah (wajh allah) and wishes to attain the state of turning toward Him during prayer.

Ishaq bin 'Ammar narrates, "I said to Abu 'Abdillah as-Sadiq ('a), '{It so happens that} I supplicate and desire to weep, but I cannot. At times, I remember some

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1- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.٤, pg.١١٢٠, hadith no.٨٧٦١; and Usul al-Kafi, pg.٥٢١.

2- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.٤, pg.١١٤١, hadith no.٨٧٦٣.

of my family members who have passed away, so my heart softens and I weep. Is this allowed?' He replied, 'Yes, do remember {them}; and when your heart becomes tender, do weep and invoke your Lord, the Blessed, the Exalted."(1)

If the state of weeping did not give the supplicant a helping hand to soften his heart, then he should simulate weeping (tabaki); for it results in weeping, and weeping, in turn, results in the softening of the heart, which subsequently opens up the heart onto Allah.

Sa'd bin Yasar reports, "I said to Imam as-Sadiq ('a), 'I {only} simulate weeping when I supplicate, I cannot weep.' He said, 'Yes {there is no objection in it.}'"(2)

Abu Hamzah ath-Thumali narrates that Imam as-Sadiq ('a) once said to Abu Basir, "If you feared the occurrence of something or you had a wish, then begin by glorifying Allah and praise Him as is worthy of Him. Thereafter, send blessings on the Holy Prophet (S) and pray for your need; and try to weep...my father used to say, 'A servant is in the nearmost position to {his} Lord, the All-mighty, the Majestic, when he is prostrating (sajid) and weeping.'"(3)

Among the formulas of remembrance (dhikr) of Imam as-Sadiq ('a) in prostration was, "My lowly face has prostrated before Your Mighty face; my perishing face has prostrated before Your Eternal and Everlasting face; my needy face has prostrated before Your Self-sufficient face. My face, hearing, sight, flesh, blood, skin, bones, and what the earth has borne of

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۱- Usul al-Kafi, pg.۵۲۳; and Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.۱۱۲۱, hadith no.۸۷۶۷.
۲- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.۱۱۲۲, hadith no.۸۷۶۹; and Usul al-Kafi, pg.۵۲۳.
۳- Usul al-Kafi, pg.۵۲۴; and Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.۱۱۲۲, hadith no.۸۷۷۰.

(me, have {all} prostrated before Allah, Lord of the worlds."(1)

7. Continuity in Praying in Adversity and Ease

Continuation in invoking Allah during adversity (shiddah) and ease (rakha'), and the precedence of supplication in ease over supplication during hardships, is a matter about which there has been emphasis in the Islamic sources.

The Holy Prophet (S) is narrated to have said, "Make yourself known to Allah during ease, He will know you in adversity."(2)

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) says: "Whoever takes precedence in invoking {Allah}, he will be answered when a calamity befalls {him} and it will be said, '{This is} a voice known {to us}', and he will not be obscured from the skies. {But} he who takes no precedence in supplicating will not be answered during affliction, and the angels shall say, 'We do not recognize this voice.'"(3)

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) is also reported to have said, "Supplication during ease extract the needs during adversity."(4)

He ('a) is also narrated to have said, "Whoever likes to be answered during adversity, should increase supplicating during ease."(5)

He ('a) has also said, "My grandfather used to say, "Take precedence in making supplication; for if a servant consistently invokes {Allah} and then an affliction befalls him and he prays {to Allah}, it would be said, '{This is} a voice known {to us}. But if he is not consistent in supplicating and a calamity befalls him, it would be said, 'Where were you before this day?"(6)

The above narrations point to a subtle and profound meaning; for supplication is 'turning toward Allah' (iqbal),

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1- Al-Balad al-Amin, pg.331.

۲- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.۱۰۹۷, hadith no.۸۶۷۲.

۳- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.۱۰۹۶, hadith no.۸۶۶۴.

۴- Ibid, vol.۴, pg.۱۰۹۶, hadith no.۸۶۶۵.

۵- Ibid, vol.۴, pg.۱۰۹۶, hadith no.۸۶۶۰.

۶- Ibid, vol.۴, pg.۱۰۹۶, hadith no.۸۶۶۷.

and the most effective and closer of it to acceptance is the one in which the iqbal is at its climax. So when the state of 'turning' is actualized and the heart becomes pure and the supplicant turns to Allah wholly, then there would be no obstacle between the prayer and the response. On the contrary, if the state of turning to Allah is poor, the similar would be the response.

The state of turning toward Allah and drawing the attention of the heart to Him can only be acquired through frequent supplication. This is exactly like any other act in human life. Thus, the more frequent one's invocation, the more easily he would be able to attain the state of iqbal and his heart would yield to him more in being attentive to Allah.

Consequently, when a calamity befalls him and he turns to Allah at that time, his heart would easily and swiftly obey him in turning toward Allah, as his prayer would be nearer to acceptance, and there would be no hindrance between his supplication and the response from Allah.

Fadl bin 'Abbas says that the Prophet of Allah (S) said to me, "Be mindful of Allah, He will be mindful of you. Be mindful of Allah and you will {always} find Him before you. Make yourself known to Him in ease, He will know you in adversity."(۱)

Imam 'Ali bin al-Husayn ('a) used to say, "I have not seen the like of taking precedence in making

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۱- Man la Yahduruhu al-Faqih, vol.۲, pg.۳۵۸.

supplication; for the response (ijabah) is not within the reach of a person at all times."(1)

Abu Dharr al-Ghaffari reports that the Holy Prophet (S) said, "O Aba Dharr! Make yourself known to Allah at times of ease, He will know you during adversity. If you ask, ask from Allah, and if you seek help, seek the help of Allah."(2)

It is narrated that Abu Ja'far al-Baqir ('a) used to say, "The prayer of a believer in ease (rakha') ought to be like his prayer at times of adversity (shiddah). He should not slack off if he is granted {his request}; so do not get weary of making supplication, for indeed supplication has a great position with Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic."(3)

8. Fulfilling the Covenant of Allah

It is related in Tafsir al-Qumi that Imam as-Sadiq ('a) was asked, "Allah, the Exalted, says: 'Call Me, I will answer you', we do call Him but are not answered." He said, "Because you do not keep the covenant of Allah; Allah says: '...And fulfill My covenant, I will fulfill your covenant.'(4) By Allah, had you fulfilled to Allah His, He would have fulfilled to you yours."(5)

9. Simultaneity of Prayer with Efforts

One of the conditions for the acceptance of a supplication is to follow it up with endeavour ('amal). Prayer without putting efforts to attain one's need is of no avail, as endeavour does not dispense with prayer. These are two different points.

The first point is that supplication cannot be a substitute for endeavour.

In his advice to Abu Dharr, the Holy Prophet (S)

1- Al-Irshad of al-Mufid, pg.277.

2- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.4, pg.1098; and 'Uddat ud-Da'i, pg.127.

3- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.4, pg.1111, hadith no.8729.

.Qur’an, ۲:۴۰ -۴

Tafsir as-Safi, pg.۵۷, under the exegesis of verse ۱۸۶ of Chapter Two, lithographic -۵
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says: "O Aba Dharr! The example of one who supplicates without acting(1) is like he who shoots {an arrow} without a bow."(2)

Umar bin Yazid reports, "I said to Imam as-Sadiq ('a), 'A person says: 'I will sit in my house, I will pray and fast and worship Allah. As for my sustenance, it will come to me.' He said, 'This is one of the three people who would not be answered."(3)

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) has said, "One who invokes without acting is like he who shoots without a bow."(4)

He ('a) is also narrated to have said, "The supplication of three people are rejected; he who sits in his house and says: 'O my Lord! Give me provision'; for it is said to him, 'Did I not ordain for you a way to obtain your provision? ..."(5)

Hence, if a father was just to pray to Allah for the spiritual well being and guidance of his child without giving importance to his correct up-bringing, then his prayer shall not be answered.

Similarly, if a sick person were to pray for his recovery but without consulting a physician and taking medicine and maintaining the proper diet necessary for his recovery, then the acceptance of such a prayer would be hindered.

The second point is that putting efforts alone does not suffice.

The Holy Prophet (S) has said, '{On the Day of Judgement} two people will enter the Heaven, both of whom used to perform the same deeds {in the world}. Upon

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۱- That is, without putting efforts and employing the means ordained by Allah to attain his need.

۲- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, kitab as-Salat, abwab al-du'a', bab no.۳۲, hadith no.۳.

۳- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.۱۱۶۰, hadith no.۸۹۱۳.

۴- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.۱۱۷۵, hadith no.۸۹۶۵.

۵- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.۱۱۷۵, hadith no.۸۹۶۵.

seeing one above himself, the other will say, 'O My Lord! Why did You give him {all this} when our deeds were the same?' Allah, the Exalted, will reply, 'He asked Me {for it}, but you did not ask Me.' The Prophet then said, 'Ask Allah for His grace and pray for His bounties in abundance, for nothing equals this in importance."(۱)

The Holy Prophet (S) has also said, "Indeed Allah has servants who do {righteous} deeds, so He gives them {of His mercy}; and there are others who sincerely ask Him, so He grants them. Thereafter, He will gather all of them in the Heaven. So those who performed {good} deeds shall say, 'Our Lord, You gave us because we acted {righteously}, but why did You give to these {people}?' He will say, 'These are my servants. I gave you your reward without wasting anything of your deeds. These people besought Me, hence I gave them and enriched them; this is My grace, I give it to whomsoever I desire."(۲)

۱۰. Supplication within the Framework of the Divine Norms

Supplication is not breaking the ontological laws of Allah operating in the universe, nature, history, and society. The norms of Allah do not alter or change.

The supplicant ought not to pray for something which contradicts the norms of Allah or contrasts His legislative (tashri'iyyah) laws.

Imam 'Ali ('a) was once asked, "Which prayer is the most erroneous one?" He replied, "Praying for that which is not possible."(۳)

He ('a) is also reported to have said, "O supplicant! Do not ask for

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۱- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.۱۰۸۴, hadith no.۸۶۰۸.

۲- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.۱۰۸۴, hadith no.۸۶۰۹.

۳- Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۹۳, pg.۳۲۴.

".what is not going to happen and is illegal

Praying for 'that which is not going to happen' (ma la yakunu) is to pray for change in .the norms of Allah regarding the society, nature or universe

And asking for 'that which is illegal' (ma la yahillu) is opposing the legislative system of .Allah in human life

It is to this regard that Allah, the Exalted, says: "...even if you plead forgiveness for (them seventy times, Allah shall never forgive them..."(١

Abstinence from Sins .١١

Among the other conditions for the acceptance of a prayer is abstinence from sins and repenting of them. How can a person attain the state of turning toward Allah (iqbal), which is the essence of supplication, when he is indulged in disobeying Allah, ?turns away from His commands and does not repent to Him

Muhammad bin Muslim narrates from Imam al-Baqir ('a), "It so happens that a person asks Allah for a need and He decides to fulfill it sooner or later, but the person commits a sin during this time, so Allah, the Exalted, says to the angel, 'Do not grant his need and deprive him of it; for he has exposed himself to My wrath and {thus} (deserves to be deprived by Me.'"(٢

It is reported that the Holy Prophet (S) said, "{One day} Prophet Musa ('a) passed by a man who was in a state of prostration. After {Prophet Musa} finished his work, he ,found him still prostrating. So he ('a) said, 'If your need was in my hand

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.Qur'an, ٩:٨٠ -١

.Usul al-Kafi, pg.۴۴٠ -٢

I would have surely granted it to you.' At this, Allah revealed to him, 'O Musa! Even if he were to prostrate to the extent that his head is separated {from his body}, I will not accept {his prayer}, unless he turns away from what I dislike to what I like."(1)

12. Congregation for Supplication and Asking the Believers to say Amin

Among the things insisted upon in the Islamic narrations is prayer in the congregation of the believers (mu'minin), for the congregation of believers before Allah is always among the stations of Allah's mercy. No group of believers comes together, provided Allah is pleased with their gathering, except that their congregation shall be closer to Allah's mercy and it will be among the stations of his grace.

Ibn Khalid reports Imam as-Sadiq ('a) saying, "No group of forty believers come together and pray to Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, for something, except that they shall be answered. If their number does not reach forty, then {if} four {of them} pray to Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, ten times, Allah will respond to them. And if their number does not reach four, then if one {of them} were to pray to Allah forty times, Allah, the All-mighty, the All-compeller, will answer him."(2)

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) has also said, "Whenever my father would become grief-stricken because of something, he would call the women and children, and then he would pray {to Allah} and they would say amin."(3)

13. Consistency in Praying to Allah

Among the things that a supplicant should be careful about in prayer is that he should not lose the

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1- 'Uddat ud-Da'i, pg.125.

2- Usul al-Kafi, pg.525.

3- Ibid; and Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.4, pg.1144, hadith no.8863.

state of consistency (tarassul) in asking Allah, the Exalted, and demanding from Him. For the essence and spirit of supplication is constituted by turning toward Allah, beseeching and entreating Him earnestly, and the recitation of the supplications .(handed down to us from the A'immah ('a

The supplicant ought not to lose this state, for it is in the state of consistently praying without constraint (takalluf) that one may experience within himself a turning toward Allah, a sense of humility and a softening of the heart, which he may not experience .even while reciting the transmitted supplications

Hence, it is important for a supplicant to preserve the state of prayer (halat ad-du'a'), because of what it entails of the consistence and ease in being attentive to Allah and .imploring Him

The A'immah ('a) sometimes used to prefer for a supplicant to supplicate consistently with whatever came into his mind, rather than supplicating with the transmitted prayers, so that the supplication may not become devoid of the consistency and .continuity

Zurarah is reported to have said, "I said to Abu 'Abdillah ('a), 'Teach me a supplication (du'a'). He said, 'The best of supplications is indeed that which flows on your (tongue.'"(۱

Preparing the Self for Prayer .۱۴

.'Prayer is 'turning toward Allah'. The soul must be prepared for this 'turning

Among the ways of preparing the soul is to begin with praising and extolling Allah, thanking Him for His blessings and grace, seeking forgiveness from sins, and sending salutations and blessings on the Prophet of Allah (S) and

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.Al-Aman min al-Akhtar of Sayyid Ibn Tawus, pg.۳ -۱

his Progeny ('a). This preamble prepares the supplicant to turn to Allah, and to ask and .beseech Him

Praising Allah, thanking Him, seeking forgiveness, and sending blessings on the Prophet (S) and his Progeny have appeared in the beginning of most of the .supplications, as they pervade many of them

Ays bin Qasim reports Imam as-Sadiq ('a) to have said, "If anyone among you sought' a need, then let him praise Allah and extol Him… and when you are about to ask for a need, then glorify Allah, the All-mighty, the All-compeller; praise and extol Him saying, 'O Most Generous of those who give, O Best of those who have been asked from, O Most Merciful of those who were asked for mercy, O One, O All-embracing, O He who neither begat nor was begotten, nor has He any equal, O He who has neither taken any spouse nor son, O He who does whatever He wishes, and consolidates whatever He decrees, and decides whatever He likes, O He who intervenes between a man and his heart, O He who is in the highest position, O He who there is nothing like Him, O All-'.hearing, All-seeing

And remember Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, much by His names, for the names of Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, are many. And send blessings on Muhammad (S) and his Progeny, and say, 'O Allah, enlarge {my share} from Your lawful (halal) provision so that through which I may hold back my face

from the wrongdoing}, give back the trust with me, maintain good relations with my} '.relatives, and that it should be an aid for me in {performing} hajj and 'umrah

Then he said, 'A man entered the mosque and performed two units of prayers, and then he {immediately} invoked Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic. So the Messenger of Allah (S) said, 'The servant hastened {in calling} his Lord'. Another person came {in}, he offered two units of prayers, then he praised Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, and sent salutations on the Prophet (S). So the Prophet of Allah (S) said, 'Ask (and you will be granted.'"(١)

Abu Kahmas narrates from Imam as-Sadiq ('a), "{One day} a man entered the mosque and began {praying for his need} before praising Allah and sending salutations on the Prophet (S) . So the Prophet (S) said, 'The servant hastened {in calling} his Lord.' Then came in another {person}, he offered prayers (salat), praised Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, and sent blessings on the Messenger of Allah (S) . (So the Prophet of Allah (S) said, 'Ask and you shall be granted.'"(٢)

Safwan al-Jammal narrates from Imam as-Sadiq ('a), "Any supplication by which Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, is called upon is obscured (mahjub) from the (heavens until {the supplicant} sends blessings on Muhammad (S) and his Progeny."(٣)

It is also reported from as-Sadiq ('a), "A prayer remains veiled from the heavens until {the supplicant} sends blessings on Muhammad (S) and his

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.Usul al-Kafi, pg.۵٢۴; and Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.١١٢۶, hadith ٨٧٨۶ -١
.Usul al-Kafi, pg.۵٢۵; and Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.١١٢٧, hadith ٨٧٨٨ -٢
.Usul al-Kafi, pg.۵٢٨; and Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.١١٣۵, hadith no.٨٨٢۶ -٣

(Progeny."(1)

Calling Allah by His Beautiful Names .15

Allah loves His servants to call upon Him with His Beautiful Names (asma' al-husna). "Say, 'Invoke 'Allah' or invoke 'the All-beneficent'. Whichever {of His names} you may (invoke, to Him belong the Best Names..."(2)

Each of these Beautiful Names of Allah is a key among the keys of His mercy and grace. There has been great emphasis in the Islamic sources regarding supplicating with the Beautiful Names of Allah. There are numerous traditions that if a believer supplicates Allah with His Beautiful Names ten times, He, the Exalted, would respond .to him

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) says: "Whoever says 'O Allah' ten times, it is said to him, 'Here I (am, what is your need?'"(3)

Abu Basir reports Imam as-Sadiq ('a) to have said, "If a person says in the state of prostration 'O Allah, O my Lord, O my Master' three times, Allah, the Blessed, the (Exalted, will answer him saying, 'Here I am My servant! Ask for your need.'"(4)

Abdullah bin Ja'far narrates in Qurb al-Isnad from Mas'adah bin Sadaqah who said,' "Ja'far {bin Muhammad} told me, '{Once} some of the children of my father complained {to him of an affliction}. So when he passed by them, he said, 'Say ten times 'O Allah, O Allah', for none of the believers says this except that the Lord, the (Blessed, the Exalted, says: 'Here I am My servant! Ask for your need.'"(5)

Imam 'Ali bin al-Husayn ('a) is reported to have said, "The Holy Prophet (S) heard a man saying, 'O Most

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1- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.4, pg.1137, hadith no.8837; and al-Majalis of al-Mufid, pg.60.

2- Qur'an, 17:110.

3- Usul al-Kafi, pg.541; and Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.4, pg.1130, hadith no.8798.

.Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.۱۱۳۱, hadith no.۸۸۰۲ -۴

.Qurb al-Isnad, pg.۲; and Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.۱۱۳۲, hadith no.۸۸۰۹ -۵

Merciful of the merciful.' So he laid his hand on the shoulder of the man and said, 'The Most Merciful has turned to you with His face, ask your need.'"(1)

16. Presenting the Needs before Allah

Allah, the Exalted, knows what we want, what we need and what we are asking for. Although His knowledge suffices Him from our request, He, the Exalted, loves that we should present our needs to Him, to the extent that sometimes He even puts us in need so that we may take our needs to Him.

Nonetheless, if Allah hates a person, He would suffice him and make him needless so that he may not invoke Him and raise his hands toward Him.

When man presents his needs before Allah, he gets closer to Him, develops intimacy with Him, and realizes his poverty and neediness toward Him. And all this is loved by Allah, the Exalted. So when we call on Him for any of our needs, He loves us to prolong our supplication, and not to shorten it the way people do when talking to the rulers.

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) says in this regard, "Indeed Allah, the Exalted, knows what His servant wants when he calls on Him, but He loves him to reveal his needs to Him. So when you supplicate, mention your needs."(2)

17. Persistence in Praying

Persistence (ilhah) in supplicating Allah shows the profundity of one's confidence and hope in Allah, and the depth of one's attachment to Him. The greater one's confidence in Allah, the greater would be his persistence in supplicating Him.

۱- Muhasabat al-Nafs, pg.۱۴۸; and Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.۱۱۳۲, hadith no.۸۸۱۵.

۲- Usul al-Kafi, pg.۵۲۰; and Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.۱۰۹۱, hadith no.۸۶۴۲.

On the contrary, if the trust of a person in Allah is weak, then he would naturally desist from supplication and despair if he does not see response to his prayer.

The way persistence in praying to Allah reveals the depth of one's confidence in Allah, similarly it deepens one's trust in Allah and consolidates it. Moreover, the proximity of a person to Allah is in accordance with the degree of his confidence in Allah and his attachment to Him.

There has appeared great emphasis in the Islamic traditions about persistence in praying and that one should not despair in any situation.

The Holy Prophet (S) has said, "Indeed Allah loves those who persist (mulihhin) in making supplication."(١)

He (S) is also reported to have said, "Verily, Allah loves a persistent (lahuh) petitioner."(٢)

Imam 'Ali ('a) says: "Prayer is the shield of a believer. And a door which is frequently knocked at shall be opened for you."(٣)

It is narrated from Imam as-Sadiq ('a), "Supplication averts the Divine destiny (qada') after it has been confirmed. So supplicate frequently; for it is the key of every mercy and the fulfillment of every need. And that which lies with Allah can only be attained through supplication. And there is no door which is frequently knocked at except that it will soon be opened for the one who knocks it."(۴)

Imam al-Baqir ('a) says: "Allah dislikes the insistence of people in asking from one another, but He likes to be asked from insistently."(۵)

Imam

١- Bihar al-Anwar, vol.٩٣, pg.٣٠٠.

٢- Ibid, pg.٣٧۴.

۳- Wasa’il al-Shi‘ah, vol.۴, pg.۱۰۸۵, hadith no.۸۶۱۲.

۴- Wasa’il al-Shi‘ah, vol.۴, pg.۱۰۸۶, hadith no.۸۶۱۶.

۵- Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۹۳, pg.۳۷۴.

Ali ('a) is reported to have said, "Persist in asking from Him and the doors of mercy shall be opened for you."(1)

Walid bin 'Uqbah al-Hijri narrates that he heard Imam al-Baqir ('a) saying, "By Allah, no believer persists in asking for his need from Allah except that He would grant it to him."(2)

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) narrates from the Holy Prophet (S) that he said, "May Allah have mercy on a person who calls on Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, for a need, and then persists in calling on Him, whether he is answered or not." Then he recited this verse, "I will supplicate my Lord. Hopefully, I will not be disappointed in supplicating my Lord."(3)

Imam al-Baqir ('a) says: "Nay, by Allah, no one persists in asking from Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, except that He would answer him."(4)

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) is also narrated to have said, "Ask your need and persist in asking; for indeed Allah loves the persistence of the persistent among His believing servants."(5)

18. Prayer for Others and from Others

We shall discuss in chapter six of this book about what we should pray to Allah and what we should not. But at the moment we will talk on this topic to the extent that it is related to the etiquettes and requisites of supplication.

If a person opens up before Allah to his brothers in faith, and removes from his heart the grudge and hatred which may be existing between them and him, then Allah, the Exalted, will open for him the doors

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1- Ibid, vol.٧٧, pg.٢٠٥.

2- Usul al-Kafi, pg.٥٢٠.

3- Qur'an, ١٩:٤٧.

۴- Usul al-Kafi, pg.۵۲۰.

۵- Qurb al-Asnad, pg.۵۲۰.

.of His mercy

This is because the opening up of believers to one another, and their consolidating the state of mutual love and sympathy between themselves, is among the keys to Allah’s mercy for the supplicant as well as for the one for whom the supplicant prays for (al-mad’uww lahu).

With regard to the supplicant, Mu‘awiyah bin ‘Ammar reports from Imam as-Sadiq (‘a), “Praying for your brother in his absence drives sustenance (rizq) to the supplicant and averts calamities from him, and an angel says: ‘And for you is the like of that.’” (۱)

The Holy Prophet (S) has said, “Whosoever prays for a believer in his absence, an angel would call out, ‘And for you is the like of that.’” (۲)

Imam as-Sadiq (‘a) says: “The prayer of a person for his brother in his absence increases in sustenance and averts afflictions.” (۳)

Ibn Khalid al-Qammat says: “Abu Ja’far al-Baqir (‘a) said, ‘The quickest of the prayer to be answered is the prayer of a brother for his his brother {in faith} in his absence. As he begins to pray for his brother, the angel appointed over him says: ‘amin! And for you is twofold of that’” (۴)

With regard to the one prayed for (al-mad’uww lahu), it has been narrated that Allah, the Exalted, said to Musa bin ‘Imran, “Call Me with a tongue with which you have not disobeyed Me.” He said, “O my Lord! How is that possible for me?” He replied, “Call Me with the tongue of others.” (۵)

۱۹. Supplication at the Time of the Descent of Mercy

It is through supplication

p: ۱۰۹

۱- Al-Amali of at-Tusi, vol.۲, pg.۲۹۰; and Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۹۳, pg.۳۸۷.

۲- Ibid, vol.۲, pg.۹۵; and Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۹۳, pg.۳۸۴.

.Usul al-Kafi, pg.۴۳۵; and Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.۱۱۴۵, hadith no.۸۸۶۷ -۳

.Ibid -۴

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۹۳, pg.۳۴۲; and 'Uddat ud-Da'i, pg.۱۲۸ -۵

that man attracts Allah's mercy. For this reason, the best time for supplication is the time when the mercy of Allah descends. At such moments man is closer to Allah and is exposed to His mercy.

The hours in which Allah's mercy descends are many, among them is: during the recitation of the Qur'an, at the time of adhan(1), when it rains, and when the ranks of the truth and falsehood meet and people fall as martyrs. The last hour is the best of the times in which the doors of Allah's mercy are opened toward the earth.

As-Sakuni narrates from Imam as-Sadiq ('a), "Imam 'Ali ('a) has said, 'Avail yourself of the opportunity of supplication at four {times}; during the recitation of the Qur'an, at the time adhan, when it rains, and when the two armies {of truth and falsehood} meet for martyrdom.'"(2)

Imam 'Ali ('a) is reported to have said, "Avail yourself of the opportunity of supplication at five places; when reciting the Qur'an, at the time of adhan, when it rains, when the two armies meet for martyrdom, and when the oppressed (mazlum) makes supplication, as there is nothing to impede it from {reaching} the throne ('arsh)."(3)

He ('a) has also said, "Whoever recites a hundred verses of the Qur'an, any part of the Qur'an he wished, and then says 'O Allah' for seven times, then even if he were to pray against a solid rock, he would dislodge it, by the will of Allah."(4)

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) says:

1- The call to prayer.

2- Usul al-Kafi, pg.۵۲۱; and Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.۱۱۱۴, hadith no.۸۷۳۹.

3- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.۱۱۱۵, hadith no.۸۷۴۲.

4- Thawab al-A'mal-of as-Saduq, pg.۵۸.

My father used to pray for {his} need at noon (zawal ash-Shams). Whenever he“ intended do so, he would give charity (sadaqah) and smell a bit of fragrance, then he (would go to the mosque and pray for his need in accordance with the will of Allah.”(١

Praying in the Middle of the Night .٢٠

The solitude (khalwah) of the night has a great effect in the turning of the soul toward Allah and in receiving His mercy. What one experiences during the late hours of the night, of the state of turning to Allah and the ability to acquire His mercy, is hardly .experienced by him at other times

Furthermore, Allah has kept in the late hours of the night of His blessings and mercy .what He has not kept in other hours of the day and night

It is apparent from the Islamic traditions that all hours of the day and night are not equal. There are times wherein the doors of Allah's mercy are opened for man more than other times. Some hours attract the mercy of Allah more than other hours do. The best of these hours and the ones which have a greater share of the mercy of .Allah are the hours of the second half of the night

:Allah, the Exalted, says

O you wrapped up in your mantle! Stand vigil through the night, except a little, a half,“ or reduce a little from that, or add to it, and recite the Qur'an in a measured tone. Indeed soon We shall cast on you

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.Usul al-Kafi, pg.۵٢١ -١

a weighty word. Indeed the watch of the night is firmer in tread and more upright in (respect to speech."(١)

Mufaddal bin 'Amru narrates from Imam as-Sadiq ('a), "Some of what Allah whispered (naja) to Musa bin 'Imran ('a) was, 'O son of 'Imran! He who assumes that he loves me but when the night falls he does not think of Me and goes to sleep is a liar. Does not every lover love to be alone with his beloved? Here I am O son of 'Imran, I am aware of My lovers; when the night covers them their eyes go into their hearts, My punishment is embodied before their eyes, they address Me {as if} they see Me, and they speak to me {as if} they are in My presence. O son of 'Imran! Give Me humility from your heart, humbleness from your body, and tears from your eyes. Call Me in the (darkness {of the night}, for you will indeed find Me Nearmost, Answering."(٢)

There are several places in this text worth pondering on, though we do not intend to .discuss them in detail

The night serves as a covering for the friends (awliya') of Allah and guards them .١ against the discomfort of life and its distractions. It is as if the night pulls him out from the middle of the distractions that occupies him from turning to Allah and attaining detachment from everything other than Him. This is the opportunity of the seclusion (khalwah) at night when the

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.Qur'an, ٧٣:١ ۶ -١

.Al-Majalis of al-Mufid, pg.٢١۴; and Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.١١٢۵, hadith no.٨٧٨١ -٢

face of Allah (wajh allah) becomes exclusive for man, away from all distractions, and .he is able to attain in this seclusion the state of total absorption in Allah

The discomfort of the daytime and its numerous distractions diverge our power of .٢ sight and hearing. But when the night covers us and we come out of the uneasiness of life, our powers of sight and hearing, which had been diverged during the daytime, once again converge. They shift from exterior to interior, and from the uneasiness of .the daytime to inside the heart, the source of light and spiritual insight in man's life

It is at their convergence that Allah, the Exalted, opens the doors of light and spiritual insight onto the heart of a person, 'when the night covers them their eyes go into their hearts'. It is at this moment that one sees himself in the presence of Allah and .witnesses the wrath and mercy of Allah before him

Thus, when he addresses Allah he would address Him as if he sees Him and is in His presence, not from a distance, 'they address Me {as if} they see Me'. And when he talks to Allah he would talk to Him as if he is in His presence, and not away from Him, 'and they speak to me {as if} they are in My presence'. And the anger and punishment of Allah would become embodied before him as the phrase goes 'My punishment is embodied in their

.'eyes

Subsequently, the intimacy (uns) with the presence of the beloved, seclusion with Him, and the fear of His punishment seizes from them the comfort of sleep. How can one sleep when he finds himself in the presence of the beloved at the seclusion of the night, whispering and speaking to Him? How can slumber overcome him when he sees the punishment of Allah embodied in front of him? Such a state is a natural .outcome of the transformation of the power of sight from exterior to interior

In his sermon famously known as al-muttaqin (the pious ones), Imam 'Ali ('a) says: "At night they rise on their feet {for prayers}, reading parts of the Qur'an in a measured tone, creating through it grief for themselves and taking counsel with it for the cure of their ailments. If they come across a verse which arouses desire {for the Heaven}, they pursue it avidly, and their spirits turn toward it eagerly, and they feel as if it is in .front of them

And when they come across a verse which fills with fear {of the Fire}, they bend the ears of their hearts toward it, and feel as though the sound of Hell and its cries are reaching their ears. They bend themselves from their backs, prostrate on their foreheads, palms, knees and toes, beseeching Allah, the Exalted, to set {them} free {from the Fire}. In the daytime, they are enduring, learned, virtuous and Godwary."(۱)

In another narration, Imam 'Ali ('a) said

۱- Nahj al-Balaghah, sermon no.۱۹۳.

to Nawf al-Bikali about the characteristics of the night, “O Nawf! Prophet Dawud once woke up at such an hour of the night and said: this is indeed the hour in which no one makes supplication but that he will be answered.”(1)

The Holy Prophet (S) says: “In the final hours of the night Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, says: ‘Is there any supplicant whom I may answer? Is there any petitioner so that I may grant his request? Is there anyone to plead for forgiveness so that I may forgive him? Is there any repentent so that I may turn toward him clemently?’”

21. Wiping the Face and Head after Supplication

Imam as-Sadiq (‘a) says: “No one stretches his hand toward Allah, the All-mighty, the All-compeller, except that Allah -the All-mighty, the Majestic- is ashamed of turning down his request completely, until he puts in his hand what He wishes of His grace and mercy. So whenever anyone of you supplicates, then he should not withdraw his hand until after he has wiped it on his face and head.”(2)

Obstacles and Hindrances

point

What are the obstacles and impediments which prevent a prayer from ascending to Allah? This is the question we will attempt to answer in this part of the book.

Supplication, as they say, is the ascending qur’an (al-qur’an as-Sa’id) vis-à-vis the descending Qur’an (al-qur’an an-nazil) from Allah, the Exalted. The descending Qur’an calls toward the servanthood (‘ubudiyyah) of Allah, turning (iqbal) toward Him, taking shelter (luju’) in Him and attaining total absorption in Him; whilst the ascending qur’an

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1- Ibid, saying no. 104.

2- Usul al-Kafi, vol. 2, pg. 342; Man La Yahduruhu al-Faqih, vol. 1, pg. 107; and Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 93, pg. 307.

involves a response (talbiyah) to that call. The invitation is from Allah to His servants, .while the response is from the servants to Allah

However, there are a number of obstacles and hindrances which impede a prayer from ascending to Allah. Among the most important of these obstacles is wrongdoing .and disobedience to Allah

A phrase in the supplication of kumayl reads, "O Allah, forgive those of my sins which withhold the prayers." Again in another phrase it says: "I beseech You -by Your might- ".that my wrongdoings should not veil my prayer from You

.In the coming pages we will try to analyse these impediments

The Role of Sins in Veiling Man from Allah

:Bad deeds play two roles in man's life

The first role is that they take man away from Allah, and cut him off from Him. As a result, he is unable to attain the state of turning to Allah and being mindful of Him; as the reality of supplication is turning toward Allah. If a sinner is veiled from Allah by his .sins, then he will surely be veiled by them from supplication

The second role of the sins is that they prevent the prayer from ascending to Allah. If a prayer reaches Allah, then the response from Him would certainly be accomplished; for He is neither incapable nor miser. But here the supplication lacks the ability to .reach Allah

Therefore, sometimes sins stop a person from supplicating, and at other times they .withhold the ascent of a prayer to Allah

This cursory look

.at the effect of sins needs more explanation

The Twofold Role of the Soul in Receiving and Giving

The soul (qalb) is a connecting device which, on the one hand, receives from Allah, and on the other hand, it gives out; similar to the twofold function of the physical heart in .pumping blood in and out through the veins and arteries

Now, if the soul loses this feature of connecting man to Allah, then it would be devoid of all its value and it would no longer be of any benefit. It would be lifeless exactly like .the physical heart at the time of death

On the one hand, the soul receives from Allah, the Exalted, the guidance, light and spiritual insight, and, on the other hand, it gives out this guidance and light to man in .{manipulating} his movements, speech, stands, actions and relations

Let us contemplate on the Qur'an to understand this bilateral role of the soul from its .perspective

The Role of the Soul in Receiving Guidance from Allah

The verses that point to the first aspect, that is, the role of the soul in receiving from :Allah, are as follows

۱. "The faithless say, 'Why has not the Qur'an been sent down to him all at once?' So it is, so that We may strengthen your heart with it, and We have recited it {to you} in a measured tone."(۱)

The Qur'an descends on the heart at once and sometimes in parts. It strengthens the .heart, and the heart acquires from it the Divine light and guidance

۲. "Allah

۱- Qur'an, ۲۵:۳۲.

has sent down the best of discourses a scripture composed of similar motifs, whereat quiver the skins of those who fear their Lord, then their skins and hearts soften to (Allah's remembrance..."(١)

According to this verse, the heart receives from the Qur'an that which humbles and softens it. The heart interacts with the guidance of Allah and His light which He has sent to His servants. For the Qur'an is indeed a guidance from Allah, His light, and His proof to His creatures.

٣. "O mankind! Certainly a proof has come to you from your Lord, and We have sent down to you a manifest light."(٢)

This guidance and light is specific to the hearts of the believers (mu'minin) and the pious (muttaqin), as they receive it and interact with it.

٤. "This is an explanation for mankind, and a guidance and advice for the Godwary."(٣)

٥. "... these are insights from your Lord, and a guidance and mercy for a people who have faith."(٤)

The Role of the Soul in Giving Out Guidance

In the second aspect, the heart plays the role of disseminating the light and guidance it has received from Allah, and in manipulating the movements, speech, stands, relations and the concerns of a person. Here it is that man moves with the light and guidance of Allah, speaks with the light and guidance of Allah, takes his stands based on the guidance and light from Allah, and walks amidst the people with the light and guidance of Allah.

The verses that point to this second aspect

١- Qur'an, ٣٩:٢٣.

٢- Qur'an, ٤:١٧٤.

۳- Qur’an, ۳:۱۳۸.

۴- Qur’an, ۷:۲۰۳.

:of the soul are as follows

۱. "Is he who was lifeless, then We gave him life and provided him with a light by which he walks among the people, like one who dwells in a manifold darkness which he cannot leave?"(۱)

۲. "O you who have faith! Be wary of Allah and have faith in His apostle. He will grant you a double share of His mercy and give you a light to walk by, and forgive you, and Allah is all-forgiving, all-merciful."(۲)

This light based on which the believers establish their relations with the people and move with it among them, be it in politics, business, or in rest of their affairs, is in fact the light of Allah which He sends to His servants. He, the Exalted, says:

"…and one whom Allah has not granted any light has no light."(۳)

The role of the heart in the process of receiving and giving out guidance is that of an arbitrary. It receives this light from Allah and then directs with it man's power of sight, hearing and the rest of his organs. And this is a sign of the heart being healthy and sound; it receives the Qur'an and gives out the Qur'an, similar to the fertile soil which takes in light, air and water, and gives out good fruits.

Mentioning one of the characteristics of the Qur'an, Imam 'Ali ('a) says: "The Book of Allah by which you see, speak and listen."

If the soundness of the heart is

۱- Qur'an, ۶:۱۲۲.

۲- Qur'an, ۵۷:۲۸.

۳- Qur'an, ۲۴:۴۰.

lost, then it would be devoid of the power of receiving the Divine light and of manipulating man's actions. Hence, it would be unable to receive the descending Qur'an from Allah, thus losing the power of directing man to raise the ascending qur'an toward Allah through maintaining prayer (salat) and supplication. And this is the state of the obscurity of the heart (inghilaq al-qalb). Allah, the Exalted, says:

"Deaf, dumb, and blind; they will not come back {to the right path}"(١)

A deaf and blind person is not able to receive any call or light, and thus he is unable to speak also.

With regard to the Banu Isra'il, Allah says:

"Then your hearts hardened after that, so they are like stones, or even harder..."(٢)

Indeed a stone cannot receive any light, air or water, rather it rejects all that comes toward it of these things. Subsequently, it does not give out any fruit. This is in contrary to the fertile soil which produces fruits as a result of what it receives of the light, air and water.

Similarly, this is how the heart becomes if its spiritual soundness is lost. It does not receive any light, nor does it give any, and this is the state of complete obscurity; the state of the dead heart; a state in which the heart has lost all signs of life, for the life of the heart depends on what it receives and gives out. So when it is devoid of this feature, it

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١- Qur'an, ٢:١٨.

٢- Qur'an, ٢:٧۴.

is devoid of life.

Regarding the death of the heart, Allah says:

- "…Indeed Allah makes whomever He wishes to hear, and you cannot make those who are in the graves hear"[١],
- "Indeed you cannot make the dead hear, nor can you make the deaf hear the call…"[٢],
- "It is the same to them whether you warn them or do not warn them, they will not have faith.[٣]

The flaw is not in the strength of the call or in its delivery; rather, it is in the ability of the dead to hear. This is exactly the state of the obscurity of the heart and its disconnection from Allah, the Exalted.

But what is the reason of this disconnection and obscurity?

Factors which Cause the Obscurity of the Heart

The Islamic narrations assert that of the most significant factors that lead to the obscurity of the heart and its alienation from Allah are two things: disregard (i'rad) for the signs (ayat) of Allah, and commiting sins.

Some of the verses which point to the first factor are:

١. "Those who deny Our signs are deaf and dumb, in a manifold darkness."[۴]

According to this verse, denying the signs of Allah is the cause of deafness and of remaining in darkness in one's life.

٢. "And when Our signs are recited to him he turns away disdainfully as if he had not heard them {at all}, as if there were a deafness in his ears.[۵]

We notice in this verse a mutual relation between disregard for the signs of Allah

۱- Qur’an, ۳۵:۲۲.

۲- Qur’an, ۲۷:۸۰.

۳- Qur’an, ۳۶:۱۰.

۴- Qur’an, ۶:۳۹.

۵- Qur’an, ۳۱:۷.

.and being disdainful of them, and the deafness of the ears

:Regarding the second factor, that is the sins, Allah, the Exalted, says

(No indeed! Rather their hearts have been sullied by what they have been earning”(۱“

This verse clearly implies that the sins committed by a person evolve to become a rust .and dirt on the heart, sealing it and cutting it off from Allah

Sins Invert the Heart

Man commits sins until his heart is cut off from Allah. If the heart is disconnected from .Allah, it gets inverted. It becomes upside down and loses all its operative features

Imam as-Sadiq (‘a) says: “My father used to say, ‘Nothing is more destroying for the heart than the sin it commits. The heart indeed engages in a battle with the sin, and the sin continues to remain in it until it overpowers the heart. Hence, it becomes (turned upside down.”(۲

He (‘a) is also reported to have said, “When a person commits a sin, a black spot appears in his heart. If he repents of it, it disappears, but if he persisits {in committing the sin}, the spot becomes bigger until it overcomes his heart. {If this happens,} then (he would never become victorious after this.”(۳

Sins Deprive Man of the Sweetness of Remembrance

The believing hearts experience sweetness in the remembrance (dhikr) of Allah; a sweetness above which there is no sweetness. But when the heart becomes turned upside down, it is deprived of this sweetness and it no longer perceives it; just like an ill person whose physical health has

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.Qur’an, ۸۳:۱۴ -۱

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۷۳, pg.۴۱۲ -۲

.Ibid, pg.۳۲۷ -۳

been inverted by illness, and as a result he loses the appetite for good things, not because they are no more good, but because he no more desires them.

The same applies to the heart; when it is inverted, it is deprived of the sweetness of remembering Allah, the Exalted, and it no longer tastes the sweetness nor sees any attraction in His remembrance.

According to a narration, "Allah revealed to Prophet Dawud that the least I do to a person who does not practice his knowledge, out of seventy kinds of spiritual punishments, is that I remove from his heart the sweetness of my remembrance."(١)

A man came to Imam 'Ali ('a) and complained, "O Commander of the Faithful! I have been deprived of prayer (salat) at night." He ('a) replied, "You are a person whose sins have binded him."(٢)

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) says: "When a person commits a sin, he is deprived of the Night Prayer (salat al-layl). Indeed the {effect of a} bad deed on the one who commits it is faster than the {effect of a} knife on meat."(٣)

Sins that Withhold Prayer

As mentioned earlier, the alienation of the heart from Allah, the Exalted, is among the direct effects of sin on man. If the heart is disconnected from Allah, then it will neither receive the guidance from Him nor give it out.

Supplication is one of the things which man raises to Allah. This is why we said that it is the "ascending qur'an" which man raises to Allah after receiving the "descending

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١- Dar as-Salam of Shaykh al-Nuri, vol.٣, pg.٢٠٠.

٢- Ilal-al-Sharayi', vol.٢, pg.٥١٤.

٣- Usul al-Kafi, vol.٢, pg.٢٧٢.

Qur'an" from Him. So if a person is detached from the descending Qur'an then he .would undoubtedly be detached from the ascending Qur'an

Accordingly, he would be held back from supplication and would not succeed in making it. And even if the need presses him to pray to Allah, He, the Exalted, would .withhold his prayer from ascending and hence he would not find any response

".(Imam 'Ali ('a) says: "Sin hinders response (ijabah

A man once asked Imam 'Ali ('a) about the verse "Call Me, I will answer you" saying, "What has happened to us, we pray but we are not answered." He ('a) replied, "Which of your prayers do you expect to be answered when you have closed its doors and ways. So be wary of Allah and reform your deeds, and purify your hearts, bid the good (and forbid the wrong, thus Allah will answer your prayers."(١

Imam 'Ali bin al-Husayn Zayn al-'Abidin ('a) is narrated to have said, "And the sin which causes prayer to be rejected and the skies to turn dark is disobedience ('uquq) (to the parents."(٢

According to another tradition, "The sins that lead to the rejection of prayer are bad intention, impure heart, hypocrisy, despairing of the response from Allah, delaying the obligatory prayers until the lapse of their {prescribed} time, to neglect attaining proximity to Allah through good deeds and charity, and employing foul and obscene (language."(٣

Imam al-Baqir ('a) says: "It so happens that a person asks Allah for a need and it is

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.Bihar al-Anwar, vol.٩٣, pg.٣٧۶ -١

.Ma'ani al-Akhbar, pg.٢٧٠ -٢

.Ibid, pg.٢٧١ -٣

in His power to grant him his need in the near future. But the person commits a sin, so Allah, the Blessed, the Exalted, says to the angel, 'Do not grant his need and deprive him of it, for he has become the subject of My wrath and deserves to be deprived (from Me.'"(١)

Obstacles and Factors of the Ascension of Deeds

The obstacles ('awa'iq) and factors ('awamil) of the ascent of the deeds have been mentioned in the Islamic sources. Both of them have direct relation with the actions of man. The 'obstacles' hinder the elevation of the deeds to Allah, the Exalted, whereas .the 'factors' help in the ascension of the deeds to Allah

Hereunder we will cite two traditions, one regarding the 'obstacles' and the other concerning the 'factors', leaving the explanation of this significant issue in the Islamic .education and culture to another occasion, if Allah wills

Obstacles of the Ascension of Deeds

Shaykh Abu Ja'far Muhammad bin Ahmad bin 'Ali al-Qumi, a resident of the city of Rayy, relates in his book Al-Munbi' 'an Zuhd an-nabi from 'Abd al-Wahid, from those who reported it to him from Mu'adh bin Jabal, that the narrator said, "I said, 'Tell me a tradition (hadith) which you have heard from the Messenger of Allah (S) and have it in memory exactly the way he had told you.' He said, 'Indeed!', and then Mu'adh started .weeping

Then he said, 'May my father and mother be his ransom, he said {this} to me while I was near him.' {Mu'adh} said, 'As we were walking, he raised his

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.Usul al-Kafi, vol.٣, pg.٣٧٣ -١

eyes toward the skies and said, ‘All praise is due to Allah who decides for His creatures whatever He likes.’ He then called me, ‘O Mu’adh!’, I answered, ‘Yes, O Prophet of Allah and the master of the believers.’ He (S) said, ‘O Mu’adh!’ I replied, ’.‘Yes, O Messenger of Allah, the leader of the good and the Prophet of mercy

He (S) then said, ‘I am telling you something that no prophet has ever told his nation. If you preserve it, your life will be of benefit to you; but if you hear it and do not ’.preserve it, then you will have no excuse before Allah

Then he said, ‘Indeed Allah created seven angels before He created the seven heavens (sama’). For each heaven He appointed an angel whom He dignified with His greatness. And He kept at each door, out of the doors of the heavens, an angel as a doorman. The guardian angels record the deeds of His servant from morning until evening, and then they ascend with the deed while it has a light like that of the sun, until when they reach the lower heaven (sama’ ad-dunya) they start praising the deed .and amplifying it

So the {doorman} angel says: ‘Stop! Strike with it the face of the one who performed it. I am the angel of backbiting (ghibah), I do not let the action of one who backbites pass by me to the other {angel}. This is what my Lord has commanded me

’.with

The Holy Prophet (S) continued, ‘Then the angels come {again} the next day carrying a good deed with them. They pass by the {first} angel, praising and amplifying the deed until they reach the second heaven. So the angel in the second heaven says: ‘Stop! Strike with it the face of the one who performed it. Indeed he had intended to acquire the world with it. I have been entrusted with the world, I shall not let his deed ’.{pass by me to the other {angel

The Prophet (S) said, ‘Then the angels ascend –with pride- with the deed of a person who is delighted at giving charity and performing prayers. They pass with it until the third heaven when the angel says: ‘Stop! Strike with it the face of the one who performed it. I am the angel of arrogance (kibr).’ The angel would then say, ‘This is the deed with which he displayed pride in front of the people in their sittings. My Lord ’.{has ordered me not to let his deed pass by me to the other {angel

The Prophet (S) continued, ‘The guardian angels ascend with the deed of a person while it shines like a brilliant star in the sky, accompanied by the reverberation of {his} tasbih, fasting and hajj. They journey with it to the fourth heaven where the angel says: ‘Stop! Strike with this deed the face and the belly of the one who performed it. I am the angel of self-conceit

ujb). He was vain about himself that he has performed a deed, and maintained self-‘) conceit in himself. My Lord has ordered me not to let his action pass by me to the '.{other {angel

The Prophet (S) said, ‘The angels ascend with the deed of a person like a bride being taken to the bridegroom. They pass by the {fourth heaven} to the angel of the fifth heaven with jihad, prayers, {and charity} between two prayers (salatayn), while the .deed echoes a sound like that of the camels and has a brilliance like that of the sun

The angel says: ‘Stop! I am the angel of jealousy (hasad). Strike with it the face of the one who performed it and make him carry it on his shoulder. He used to be jealous of those who were learning or working in the way of Allah; and whenever he used see a merit in the action or worship of someone, he would be envious of him and fall into '.jealousy.' So he would carry his deed on his shoulder while it would be cursing him

The Prophet (S) continued, ‘The angels ascend with the action of a person, with prayers, zakat, hajj and ‘umrah, and they cross with it to the sixth heaven. {Here} the angel says: ‘Stop! I am the angel of mercy. Strike with it the face of the one who performed it, and obscure his eyes because he did not have mercy on anything. When he saw a servant

from among the servants of Allah falling into a sin for which he would be punished in the Hereafter, or afflicted with a calamity in this world, he would rejoice! My Lord has commanded me not to let his deed pass by me.'

The Prophet (S) said, 'The angels ascend with the deed of a person who performed them with endurance, out of knowledge (fiqh) and piety, containing the sound of thunder and light like that of a lightning, while three thousand angels accompany it. They journey with it to the seventh heaven where the angel says: 'Stop! Strike with it the face of the one who performed it. I am the angel of hijab (barrier). I obstruct any deed which has not been performed for the sake of Allah. {The owner of this deed} intended to acquire status with the rulers, and to be remembered by the people, and to attain fame in the cities. My Lord has instructed me not let his deed pass by me to the other {angel} so long as it is not purely for Allah.'

The Prophet (S) continued, 'The angels happily ascend with the deed of a person, with prayers, zakat, fasting, hajj, 'umrah, good conduct, silence and the remembrance of Allah in abundance, escorted by the angels of the heavens and the angels of the seven heavens altogether. They pass by all the obstacles until they stand in the presence of {Allah}, the Glorified. They testify that he was of those

who prayed and supplicated. {Here, Allah} says: 'You are the guardians of the deed of my servant, while I am vigilant of what is in his heart. He did not aim {to reach} Me with this action, and My curse is upon him.' So the angels say, 'Upon him is Your and ".'our curse

The narrator says: "Then Mu'adh began weeping. He said, 'I said, 'O Prophet of Allah! Which action should I perform and be sincere in it?' He (S) replied, 'O Mu'adh! Follow '.(your Prophet in {performing deeds with} certainty (yaqin

Mu'adh says: 'I said, 'You are the Messenger of Allah, while I am Mu'adh {i.e. an ordinary person}.' He ('a) said, 'O Mu'adh! If there is any deficiency in your action, then keep your tongue away from your brothers {in faith}, and from the memorizers of the Qur'an. Accept the responsibility of your wrongdoings and do not hold your brothers responsible for them. Do not have high opinion of yourself by censuring your brothers. Do not elevate yourself by putting down your brothers. Do not show off your deeds. Do not enter the Hereafter through this world. Do not use foul language in your .sittings such that people become cautious of you because of your ill-nature

Do not whisper with a {third} person while you are {talking to} someone else. Do not inflate the {mistakes of the} people lest the good of this world is severed from you. Do not tear the people lest the dogs

of the dwellers of the hell fire tear you. Allah, the Exalted, says: 'By those who draw {it} out gently'(۱), do you know who are these 'who draw {it} out gently?' They are the dogs of the dwellers of the hell fire who grab with the teeth the flesh and the bones.' I said, 'Who is able to acquire such characteristics?' He (S) replied, 'O Mu'adh! It is easy for whom Allah has made it easy."

The narrator says: "I did not see Mu'adh reciting the Qur'an much more than repeating this tradition."(۲)

Factors of the Ascension of Deeds

In contrast to the obstacles, there are factors which elevate the deeds to Allah, the Exalted, when they are unable to ascend on their own. Some of these factors have appeared in a Prophetic narration, blended with the gleam of Prophetic light and Divine revelation.

We will mention the full text of the narration here as reported by 'Allamah al-Majlisi in Bihar al-Anwar, which he related from al-Amali of Shaykh as-Saduq.

As-Saduq narrates in al-Amali from Sa'id bin al-Musayyab, from 'Abd ar-rahman bin Sumarah who said:

"One day we were with the Prophet of Allah (S) when he said, 'I saw some astounding things yesterday.' So we said, 'O Prophet of Allah! What is it that you saw? Tell us about it, may our souls, families and children be your ransom.'

He said, 'I saw a man from my nation whom the angel of death had approached to take his soul, but his goodness (birruhu) to his parents

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۱- Qur'an, ۷۹:۲.

۲- We have quoted this long tradition from 'Uddat ud-Da'i, pg.۲۲۸ ۲۳۰. The following annotation is also from the same book, "Sulayman bin Khalid says: 'I asked Abu 'Abdillah al-As-Sadiq ('a) regarding the verse, "Then We shall attend to the works they

have done and then turn them into scattered dust." (Qur'an, ٢٥:٢٣).' He said, 'By Allah, {they would be turned into scattered dust} even if their works were whiter than the {cloth made by the} Coptic, {because} when any forbidden (haram) thing appeared before them they would not leave it." The author of Mir'at al-'Uqul says: "{The tradition} entails an indication to the failure (habt) of the acts of devotion (ta'ah) because of the vicious acts. Failure (ihbat) means the annulment of good deeds such that they lose the effects expected of them. It is contrasted by absolution (takfir) which means the erasure (isqat) of sins such that they become devoid of the properties expected of them."

.came inbetween and stopped him from it

And I saw a man from my nation for whom the torment of the grave had been spread out, but his ablution (wudhu') came in and held him back from it.

And I saw a man from my nation who had been driven into a trap by the devils (shayatin), but the remembrance (dhikr) of Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, came to his aid and delivered him from them.

And I saw a man from my nation lolling out his tongue of thirst, but whenever he arrived at a fountain, he was not given {to drink}. So his fasting (siyam) in the month of Ramadan came to him and gave him a drink and quenched his thirst.

And I saw a man from my nation and the prophets sitting in circles, but whenever he neared a circle, he was driven away. So his bath from janabat came to him, took his hand and seated him beside them.

And I saw a man from my nation before and behind whom there was darkness, on whose right and left there was darkness, and beneath whom there was darkness; he was sunk in darkness, but his hajj and 'umrah came to him and took him out of the darkness and admitted him into the light.

And I saw a man from my nation {trying} to speak to the believers but they would not speak to him, so his kindness toward womb relatives (silat ar-rahim) came to him and

said, ‘O congregation of the believers! Do speak to him as he used to maintain good relations with his womb relatives’.

Thus, the believers spoke to him, shook hands with him, and he remained with them.

And I saw a man from my nation protecting himself from the Fire and its flames with his hands and face, so his charity (sadaqah) came to him and turned to become a shade over his head and a veil on his face.

And I saw a man from my nation whom the keepers of hell had seized from everywhere, but his enjoining good (amr bi al-ma’ruf) and forbidding wrong (nahy ‘an al-munkar) came inbetween and delivered him from them, and put him in the company of the angels of mercy.

And I saw a man from my nation kneeling down while there was barrier between him and the mercy of Allah, but his good conduct (husn al-khulq) came in and took his hand and admitted him into Allah’s mercy.

And I saw a man from my nation whose record {of deeds} had inclined towards the left (shimal), but his fear (khawf) of Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, reached him, took his record and put it in his right (yamin).

And I saw a man from my nation whose deeds weighed light in the scales, but his giving generously (afratuhu) came to him and made his scales weigh heavy.

And I saw a man from my nation standing on the brink of the Hell, but his

hope (raja') in Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, reached him and rescued him from it.

And I saw a man from my nation who had fallen in the Fire, but his tears out of the fear (khashyah) of Allah came to his aid and took him out from it.

And I saw a man from my nation on the bridge (sirat) wavering like the wavering of a palm tree on a day of tempestuous wind, but his entertaining a good opinion (husn al-zann) of Allah came and his wavering calmed down and he crossed the bridge.

And I saw a man from my nation on the bridge who would sometimes creep, and crawl at times, and get stuck at other times, so his prayers (salat) came and made him stand on his feet, thus he crossed the bridge.

And I saw a man from my nation who had reached the doors of the Heaven but whenever he neared a door it would be closed on him. So the testimony that 'There is no god but Allah' which he had uttered out of belief came to him, thus the doors were opened for him and he entered Paradise.(١)

The Means to be Employed when Praying to Allah

point

Since we have been discussing the obstacles and the factors of the ascension of deeds, it would be appropriate as well to talk about the means that we must employ when supplicating Allah, the Exalted.

Allah Himself has invited us to take recourse to Him. He says:

"They {themselves} are the ones who supplicate,

١- Bihar al-Anwar, vol.٧, pg.٢٩٠ ٢٩١.

(seeking a recourse to their Lord…”(۱)

:He also says

“O you who have faith! Be wary of Allah, and seek the means of recourse to Him…”(۲)

In fact, these means have been ordained by Allah , out of His mercy, for those of His creatures whose deeds and prayers are not strong enough to ascend to Him; as He is the Most Merciful of all merciful.

:He, the Exalted, says

“To Him ascends the good word and He elevates righteous conduct.”(۳)

‘A good word’ and ‘righteous conduct’ are part of human life. The ‘good word’ is one’s belief in Allah, his sincerity to Him, his confidence and hope in Him, and his entreating Him. While the ‘righteous conduct’ is the deed which one performs out of belief, sincerity, confidence, and hope in Allah.

The ‘good word’ ascends to Allah as per the assertion of the Qur’an, but it is the ‘righteous deed’ which elevates the ‘good word’ to Allah, as affirmed also by the Qur’an itself. The ‘good word’ cannot ascend to Allah without the ‘righteous deed’. Nevertheless, sometimes the ‘righteous deed’ is weak and ineffective, and so it is unable to elevate the ‘good word’ to Allah. Subsequently, the prayer of a person would fail to ascend to Allah, and therefore it would not be answered.

For this reason, Allah, out of His mercy for his creatures, has decreed in human life and kept at his disposal ‘means’ (wasa’il) through which he may seek recourse to Allah and which may assist him

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۱- Qur’an, ۱۷:۵۷.

۲- Qur’an, ۵:۳۵.

۳- Qur’an, ۳۵:۱۰.

to ascend to Him. Were it not for these means, a person would not have been able to raise his prayer and imploration to Allah.

The Qur'an has pointed to these means. Among such means is the prayer of the Holy Prophet (S) and his pleading for forgiveness for his nation (ummah). He, the Exalted, says:

"… Had they, when they wronged themselves, come to you and pleaded Allah for forgiveness, and the Apostle had pleaded for forgiveness for them, they would have surely found Allah all-clement, all-merciful."(١)

This verse is clear in that the pleading for forgiveness by the Prophet (S) on behalf of the believers is among the 'means' which Allah has encouraged His servants to seek recourse to when supplicating Him and seeking His forgiveness.

What has been reported in history of the coming of the believers to the Holy Prophet (S) during his lifetime and his seeking forgiveness for them, applies after his demise also; for the Prophet of Allah (S) is living even after his death and provided for near Allah, the Exalted.

Pleading with the Holy Prophet (S) and the Ahl al-Bayt ('a)

The Islamic narrations are replete with great emphasis on asking for help from the Holy Prophet (S) and his Progeny ('a).

Dawud al-Barqi says: "I used to listen to Abu 'Abdillah as-Sadiq ('a), he mostly used to implore Allah for the sake of the Five, that is the Prophet of Allah, Amir al-Mu'minin, Fatimah, al-Hasan, and al-Husayn (peace be upon all of them)."(٢)

Sama'ah is reported to have said,

١- Qur'an, ۴:۶۴.

٢- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.١١٣٩, hadith no.٨٨۴۴.

Abu al-Hasan al-Kazim ('a) said to me, 'O Sama'ah! If you sought a need from Allah,"
then say, 'O Allah, {I beseech You} for the sake of Muhammad and 'Ali, for they enjoy status and rank with You, and {I implore You} for the sake of that status to bless Muhammad and his Progeny, and do with me such and such.'"(1)

Means of Recourse to Allah in the Supplication of Kumayl

In the supplication of kumayl, we find a set of means by which Imam 'Ali ('a) has sought recourse to Allah, the Exalted. Actually, these means which have appeared in this supplication constitute the second part of it.

But in order for us to discuss the means which the Imam ('a) employs in this supplication and through which he seeks his needs, it is necessary to give a brief explanation about the structure of this supplication, the key concepts it entails, and the methodology based on which the key ideas presented in this supplication have been arranged. In actual fact, each of the famous supplications that has reached us from the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) entails specific concepts and a particular methodology based on which those concepts are organized. Each of these supplications has a specific way to commence it and to bring it to close.

Similarly, each of these supplications has a structure and a layout peculiar to it. It contains one primary concept embraced by a number of other secondary concepts. In other words, every prayer has a fundamental point to convey, and there are other subsidiary points surrounding

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۱- 'Uddat ud-Da'i, pg.۳۸.

the main one. It involves a style of beseeching Allah, the Exalted, and a way of .commencing it and bringing it to close

Had the scholars devoted enough academic importance to this issue, they would have come up with positive and remarkable achievements. Anyway, I do not intend to present here the structure of the supplication of kumayl, nor the primary concepts it entails. Rather, I just intend to briefly give an explanation about the general framework of this supplication and the main ideas which have appeared in it, in order for us to consider -through this general frame- the 'means' employed by Imam 'Ali .('a) in this prayer for seeking his needs from Allah

General Frame of the Supplication of Kumayl

The supplication of kumayl is among the famous and important prayers among the .believers. It is recited on Thursday nights, collectively and individually

This supplication belongs to Imam 'Ali ('a) which he taught to Kumayl bin Ziyad an-nakha'i. Thereafter, the believers received it through this channel and passed it on .generation after generation

This prayer is rich with such concepts as servanthood ('ubudiyyah), repentance and submission; and filled with vivid illustrations of petition, call for help and returning to .Allah

However, I do not intend, by these considerations, to give a commentary of this supplication and the ideas it entails, as this would take long. Perhaps Allah will grant .me the tawfiq to undertake such a work in future

This prayer has been particularly arranged in three stages, such that each stage prepares the ground for

the next stage. Comprehending this structure and the foundations on which it is based helps us a lot in reading this supplication and in pondering over the concepts and ideas .that have appeared in it, and also in interacting with them

I hope Allah, the Exalted, will make this endeavour beneficial and useful for those of .the believers who are consistent in reciting this supplication

Structure of the Supplication of Kumayl

.As mentioned above, this prayer consists of three stages

The First Stage is like a preamble to the supplication. It prepares the supplicant for praying and imploring Allah, the Exalted, and to stand before Him. The wrongdoings veil a person from Allah and withhold prayer. In order for one to stand before his Lord .entreating Him, he needs first to put behind him this impediment

In this introduction, 'Ali ('a) begins with two requests from Allah. The first one is forgiveness from Allah, "O Allah, forgive me those sins which tear apart protection. O "...Allah, forgive me those sins which bring down calamities

The second request is His remembrance, thankfulness to Him, and proximity to Him, "And I beseech You by Your generosity to bring me closer to Your proximity, and grant ".me with thankfulness to You, and to inspire me with Your remembrance

Both of the above things are necessary for one who intends to stand before Allah imploring Him. He has no choice but that Allah should, first, forgive his sins and remove the veils from his heart, and, secondly, allow him to get

.closer to Him, be grateful to Him, and inspire him with His remembrance

The second section of the preamble involves the presentation of poverty, need, and desire (raghbah) toward Allah, "O Allah, I ask You with the asking of one whose indigence is extreme, and who has stated to You in difficulties his need, and whose yearning for what is with You has become great..."

Here, we come across two realities. Firstly, there is no escape from Allah, "O Allah, Your power is great, Your position is high, Your deception is hidden, Your command is manifest, Your domination is overwhelming, Your power is prevalent."

Secondly, there is no refuge with other than Him, "O Allah, I find no one to forgive my sins, no one to conceal my wrongdoings, and no one to change my bad deeds into good except You, there is no god but You."

In the third section of the preamble, Imam 'Ali ('a) mentions the wretchedness and misfortune of man, "O Allah, my tribulation is tremendous, my bad state is excessive, my acts are inadequate, my fetters have tied me down, my far-fetched hopes have held me back from my gain, and this world with its delusions, my own soul with its offences, and my delaying {to act} have deceived me, O my Master."

This wretchedness and misfortune is undoubtedly the outcome of man's own deeds. This is why 'Ali ('a) beseeches Allah, the Exalted, to forgive him his sins and not to let them impede his

prayer from Him, “So I ask You, by Your might, not to let my evil deeds and acts veil my supplication from You, not to disgrace me because of the hidden things You have come to know from my innermost secret, not to hasten in punishing me for what I have done in privacy of my evil acts, wrongdoings, continuous negligence, my ignorance, my manifold passions, and my forgetfulness.”

In the fourth section, he emphasizes on a noble concept which we have just mentioned, and that is, man cannot find shelter during hardships and misfortune with other than his Master, “O Allah, who do I Have other than You, so that I may implore him to remove my affliction and to have regard for my affairs?”

The fifth section of the preamble involves two confessions; confession of wrongdoings, and the confession that man has no argument against Allah in transgressing His boundaries, violating His commands, and in following his lowly desires.

In the sixth and the last section of the preamble, after one has confessed his disobedience, sins and wretchedness, and after one has declared that there is no refuge from Allah but with Him, and after one has sought Allah not to punish him on account of his wrongdoings and offences, and, in one word, after displaying his humility and indigence before Allah, the Exalted, the servant declares that he has turned to his master in confession of his sins, regretting them, broken and apologizing, out of knowledge that there

.is no refuge from his misfortune and hardships except with Allah

He (‘a) says: “Now I have come to You, O Allah, after my shortcoming and my immoderation toward myself, proffering my excuse, regretful, broken, apologizing, pleading for forgiveness, repenting, acknowledging, submissive and confessing. I find no place to flee from what I have done, nor any place of escape to which I may turn in my affairs, other than Your acceptance of my excuse and Your entering me into the ”.compass of Your mercy

With the above phrase, the preamble comes to an end. A servant is now prepared to stand before Allah, to supplicate and entreat Him. He has affirmed all this by the ’.statement ‘Now I have come to You, O Allah

The Second Stage is the one in which the Imam (‘a) mentions the means (wasa’il) by .’which he seeks recourse to Allah. To my knowledge, there are four ‘means

The first means is the previous grace and mercy of Allah toward His creatures, and His love for them, “O You who gave rise to my creation, to the remembrance of me, to the nurture of me, to goodness toward me, and to my nourishment, bestow upon me for the sake of Your having given rise {to me} with generosity and Your previous ”.goodness to me

The second means is our love for Him and our confession of His Oneness, “Can You see Yourself tormenting me with Your fire after I have professed Your Unity, and after Your cognition my

heart has embraced, Your remembrance my tongue has constantly mentioned, and Your love to which my mind has clung, after the sincerity of my confession and my ”?supplication, humble before Your Lordship

The third means is our weakness in resisting the punishment, the thinness of our skins and the frailty of our bones, “You know my weakness before a little of this world’s tribulations and punishments, and before those ordeals which befall its inhabitants, even though it is a tribulation whose stay is short, whose subsistence is but little, and whose period is but fleeting. So how can I endure the tribulations of the next world and the great ordeals that occur within it?... O Allah, my Lord, my Master, my Protector, for which things would I complain to You, and for which of them would I lament and weep; for the pain and severity of the chastisement, or for the length and ”?period of tribulation

The fourth means is the seeking of refuge by a slave who has fled from his Master and disobeyed Him, and his asking and calling upon Him for help when he has no way .out and does not find any refuge except with his Master

The Imam (‘a) illustrates this means remarkably with the following words, “So by Your might, my Master and my Protector, I swear sincerely, if You leave me with speech, I will lament to You from the midst of the Fire’s inhabitants with the lamentation of the hopeful; I will cry to

You with the cry of those crying for help; I will weep to You with the weeping of the bereft; and I will call upon You, where are You, O Helper of the believers, O Goal of the hopes of {Your} knowers, O Succor of those who seek assistance, O Beloved of the hearts of the sincere, and O Lord of the worlds."

By putting forth these four means, the second stage of this prayer comes to the end. The supplicant sought recourse to Allah with these means in order for him to be able to stand before Allah, supplicating and beseeching Him.

Now, let us enter together with 'Ali ('a) in the third stage of the prayer. In this final stage, the Imam ('a) presents his needs to Allah one after another. The needs begin from the low point related to the petitioner and his actions, and end at the climax where the supplicant aspires and craves the infinite mercy of his Master.

At the lowest point, we say, "O Allah, my Master, I beseech You... to forgive me on this night and at this hour every offence I have committed, every sin I have perpetrated, every ugly thing I have concealed..."

At the culmination of the needs, we say, "And make me among the most excellent of Your slaves in share with You, the nearest of them in station to You, and the most elected of them in proximity to You..."

It is worthy of note here that the wishes which

the Imam (‘a) presents before Allah through the above phrases can be classified into :four kinds

The first kind is that He may forgive us our sins, not punish us, overlook the offences we have committed, and what we have perpetrated of evil, “…to forgive me on this night and at this hour every offence I have committed, every sin I have perpetrated, every ugly thing I have concealed, every folly I have enacted -whether I have hidden or announced it, whether I have concealed it or manifested it, every evil act which You have commanded the Noble Writers to record, those whom You have appointed to watch over what appears from me, and whom You have made, along with my bodily ”.organs, witness against me

In the second kind, the Imam (‘a) invokes Allah’s mercy in all affairs and in every provision {from Him}. He prays to Allah to increase his share of every good that He sends down, “{And I beseech You} to bestow upon Me an abundant share of every ”…good You send down, goodness You unfold, provision You spread out

.This prayer is all embracing such that it does not leave out anything of Allah’s mercy

The third kind which is the longest part of this supplication is the one which attracts .the attention of the Imam (‘a) most; that is, his relation with Allah

Imam ‘Ali (‘a) prays to Allah to make his time filled with His remembrance and connected to His service, and to grant

him seriousness in his fear of Him, and to take him closer to Himself and give him a place in His neighbourhood, “I beseech You… to make my times in the night and the …day inhabited by Your remembrance, and joined to Your service

Strengthen my bodily parts in Your service, fortify the instruments of my soul in determination, and bestow upon me earnestness in my fear of You and continuity in my being joined to Your service, so that I may move easily toward You in the battlefields of the foremost, hurry to You among the prominent, desire fervently Your proximity among the fervently desirous, move nearer to You with the nearness of the sincere, fear You with the fear of those who have certitude, and gather with the ”.believers in Your neighbourhood

However, it should not go unsaid here that both of the first and the third types of wishes are peculiar to the relation of a servant with Allah. The difference is in that the first type of wishes are negative in nature, that is, a person pleads with Allah to forgive his sins and overlook them; while the third type of wishes are positive, that is, his only concern is to establish his relation with Allah on a firm ground of sincerity, .fear, love and yearning for Him

In the fourth kind of wishes, the Imam (‘a) asks Allah to keep him away from the deception of the tyrants, their trickery and mischief, to return their trickery to

themselves, and to protect him from their oppression and harm, "O Allah, whosoever intends evil for me, desire {it} for him, and whoever deceives me, deceive him... and spare me the evil of my enemies from among the jinn and men."

This was a quick summary of the structure of this holy supplication. However, there is need for further explanantion and elaboration.

Four Means of Recourse in the Supplication of Kumayl

We will now talk in detail about the four means of recourse which have appeared in this supplication, and which actually constitute the second part of it, as mentioned earlier.

The first means is Allah's previous goodness (birr), kindness (karam), and grace (fadl) toward His servants. Should there be any shortcoming and flaw in the action and endeavour of a person which keeps him away from Allah, then Allah's previous grace and mercy toward him would intercede with Him on his behalf.

His previous grace and mercy toward His servants affirms His love (hubb) for them. This 'Divine love' is a means of recourse that one sends forth before seeking his needs from Allah, the Exalted. In case a servant does not deserve Allah's mercy, then His love toward him would qualify him to attain His mercy and grace, and would place the servant in the position of being answered. The Imam ('a) says in this regard, "O You who gave rise to my creation, to the remembrance of me, to the nurture of me, to goodness toward me... Bestow upon me for the sake of Your having given

".rise {to me} with generosity, and Your previous goodness to me

He, the Exalted, began first with our creation (khalq), remembrance (dhikr), nourishment (tarbiyah), and showed goodness (birr) toward us before we even asked Him for that, and without we deserving this goodness and remembrance from Him. If this is the case, then He is more entitled to do good to us and honour us if we are to pray to Him and ask from Him for all this. And if our wrongdoings and sins obstruct His goodness and mercy, then His love for us would indeed mediate between Him and us, .and make us subject to His kindness and mercy

The second means is our love for Him. In the first means, the Imam ('a) sought recourse to Allah with His love for us, and thereafter seeks recourse to Him with our love for Him. And this is as effective a means as His love for us. This is because the element of love has a great value that nothing can equal it in the eyes of the beloved. However much we may doubt in our love for something, we cannot doubt in our love for Allah and His friends (awliya'). Love is a commodity which Allah, the Exalted, never .rejects.). Love is a commodity which Allah, the Exalted, never rejects

Parallel to this means is our profession of His Oneness, our humility before Him, our prayers, our prostrations, our remembrance of Him, and our testimony that He is our Lord

rabb) and we are His servants. However, all these can be summarized in two things,) our love for Him and our profession of His Oneness (tawhid). And we are confident that 'love' and 'Oneness' are two commodities that would never be rejected by Allah; .the two things we can never doubt even for a moment

Seeking recourse to Allah with this means, Imam 'Ali ('a) says: "Can You see Yourself tormenting me with Your fire after I have professed Your Unity, and after Your knowledge my heart has embraced, Your remembrance my tongue has constantly mentioned, Your love to which my mind has clung? And after the sincerity of my "?confession and my supplication, humble before Your Lordship

As a comment on these phrases, I recall a story. It is said that after Allah granted him kingdom and power over Egypt, one day Prophet Yusuf ('a) was viewing the city from the balcony of his palace. With him in the balcony was a righteous servant of Allah whom He had bestowed with knowledge and light. A young man happened to pass under the balcony, so that righteous man said to Prophet Yusuf ('a), "Do you know this young man?" "No", he answered. The righteous man said, "This is the infant who testified to your innocence the day you were accused by the King's wife. 'A witness of her own household testified, 'If his shirt is torn from the front, she tells the truth and he lies. But if his shirt is

(torn from behind, then she lies and he tells the truth.’(1)

That suckling infant who bore witness in the cradle in favour of you has {now} grown up to become a young man; here he is.”

So Prophet Yusuf (‘a) called him and seated him beside him. He acclaimed him and bestowed a robe of honour upon him, whilst the pious servant looked in amazement at what Prophet Yusuf (‘a) was doing.

“Are you astonished at what I have done with this young man?” asked Prophet Yusuf (‘a). The pious man said, “No. But this young man did not do anything except that he testified to your innocence. And it was Allah who made him to speak, so he does not deserve any credit for it. But in spite of this, you gave him such respect and bestowed a robe of honour upon him.”

The moral of the story is that if Prophet Yusuf (‘a) held that young man in great esteem just because he testified to his innocence, then how can Allah burn the face of a servant who used to prolong his prostrations before Him, or burn the heart of a servant after it is filled with His love, or burn a tongue which frequently remembered Him, testified to His Oneness, and denied partners to Him.

In this regard, the Imam (‘a) says: “Would that I knew, my Master, my Lord and my Protector, are You going to inflict Fire over faces that fell down in prostration before Your greatness, or

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۱- Qur’an, ۱۲:۲۶ ۲۷.

over tongues voicing sincerely the profession of Your Oneness and thanking You in praise, hearts acknowledging Your Divinity through verification, or over minds encompassing knowledge of You until they have become humble, and upon the bodily members speeding to the places of Your worship in obedience and beckoning for Your forgiveness in submission. Such opinion is not held of You! Nor has such been reported ”.about You, thanks to Your grace, O All-generous

The third means is our weakness to bear the torment, the delicacy of our skin, the frailty of our bones, and our little endurance and patience; for weakness (da’f) is an effective means to seek recourse with to the Strong (qawiyy), as in every weakness .there is something which attracts the Strong, His affection and mercy

There is some secret in ‘weakness’ that it always seeks the strong, as there is something in ‘power’ that it always searches for the weak. Each of them is in pursuit of the other. In its weakness, a suckling infant searches for the affection of the mother, just as the the sympathy of the mother seeks the weakness and feebleness .of the baby

In fact, there is no weapon more effective on the Strong than weeping and .{entertaining} hope in His mercy. This is the means and weapon of the weak

Amir al-Mu’minin (‘a) says in this supplication, “O He whose name is a remedy {for all‘ illnesses}, and whose remembrance is a cure... have mercy upon him whose only capital is

".hope, and whose only weapon is lamentation

The hope that a needy entertains of the rich is his asset. The tears of the weak before the strong are his weapon. Whoever does not understand the norms (sunan) of Allah, the Exalted, in the universe with regard to the relation of a weak to the strong and vice versa, cannot comprehend the touching phrases in the speech of the Imam ('a).

In another whispered prayer (munajat) of his, Imam 'Ali ('a) says: "You are the Strong and I the weak! Has anyone mercy on the weak but the Strong?"

Now, in the supplication of kumayl, Imam 'Ali ('a) is seeking recourse to Allah with the weakness (da'f) of the servant, lack of his means, quick fading of his patience and forebearance, thinness of his skin, and the frailty of his bones. He says: "O my Lord, have mercy on the weakness of my body, the thinness of my skin, and the frailty of my bones..."

Our state in this world is such that if a thorn pricks us, or a burning coal touches us, or a little illness befalls us, then it strips us of sleep, comfort and tranquility. This is bearing in mind that these afflictions are insignificant and their period is normally short, they are meant for testing the mankind, and, above all, they are a mercy from Allah. So what shall be our condition if we are to be driven to the severe torment when it will be said to

the angels of punishment, “Seize him, and fetter him. Then put him into hell. Then, in a chain whose length is seventy cubits, bind him.”(1)

The Imam (‘a) says: “You know my weakness before a little of this world’s tribulations and punishments, and before those ordeals which befall its inhabitants, even though it is a tribulation and ordeal whose stay is short, whose subsistence is but little, and whose period is but fleeting. So how can I endure the tribulations of the next world and the great ordeals that occur within it? For it is a tribulation whose period is long, whose station endures, and whose sufferers are given no respite, since it only occurs as a result of Your wrath, Your vengeance and Your anger, and these cannot be withstood by the heavens and the earth. O my Master, so what about me?! For I am Your weak, lowly, base, wretched, and miserable slave. O Allah, my Lord, my Master, and my Protector.”

The fourth means with which the Imam (‘a) seeks recourse to Allah in this supplication is the desperate need (idtirar) of the servant to Allah. This is an effective means to someone before whom one presents his neediness, and does not find any other person to fulfill his wish but him.

By ‘desperate need’, I mean a state in which a servant does not find anyone else to fulfill his need apart from Allah, the Exalted, and does not have any place of refuge except with Allah; the

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1- Qur’an, ۶۹:۳۰ ۳۲.

situation in which one takes flight from Allah, but does not find any shelter to seek protection with except Him, the Exalted. Such a scene is among the most effective in .attracting Allah's mercy and clemency

In her little world, a baby does not see any protector, supporter, or one who can fulfill her needs other than her father and mother. Thus, she develops intimacy with them, and finds with them -within her little horizon- all her wishes, and what she needs of .mercy, benevolence and sympathy

Subsequently, whenever something befalls her, or she becomes afflicted by a calamity, or she becomes afraid of something, she immediately takes refuge with her .parents and finds security and mercy with them

Moreover, if she has done something because of which she deserves to be punished by her parents, and she fears them for herself, then she would turn to her right and left looking for refuge. But when she finds no one to give her protection, then she turns to her parents throwing herself into their arms, asking for their help, at a time .when they are intending to punish her

This scene is among those which, most of the time, brings about the sympathy of her .parents, and earns her their love and affection

Now, in this prayer, the Imam ('a) points to such a concept. Indeed he had learned to take refuge with Allah in everything such that if any affliction or calamity were to befall him, he would turn to

.Allah and would not find anyone to fulfill his need but Him

In such a situation, he also sees a servant of Allah to be subject to the wrath of Allah and his punishment, the very One whose mercy and protection he hopes for. Here, he finds no refuge but with Him, no where to escape but to Him, and no protector other .than Him

So, while the angels of punishment drive him to the hell fire, he screams to Him, the Exalted, seeking security from Him, taking refuge from His anger with His mercy, asking and crying for His help, just like a child who has been subject to the wrath of her parents and does not flee from them except to them and finds no one to protect .her except them

Now, let us listen to the Imam's lucid and sensitive words which express the spirit of tawhid and prayer, "So by Your Might, my Master and my Protector, I swear sincerely, if You leave me with speech, I will lament to You from the midst of the Fire's inhabitants with the lamentation of the hopeful, I will cry to You with the cry of those crying for help, I will weep to You with the weeping of the bereft, and I will call on You: where are You, O Sponsor of the believers, O Goal of the hopes of Your knowers, O Aid of those who seek assistance, O Friend of the hearts of the sincere, and O

".Lord of the worlds

This was the first aspect of the issue. The second aspect is similar to the first one in being clear and evident with regard to the relation of Allah with His servant. The first aspect can be summed up in the relation of a servant with Allah, by his being in need of Him and taking refuge with Him, whilst the other aspect of the issue is denoted by the relation of a servant with Allah in that he seeks protection in His security, asks for His help and cries for His mercy and grace whilst he is exposed to the punishment of .Allah

Is it then possible that Allah, the Most Merciful of all merciful, hears the cry for help of a servant whose ignorance and heedlessness has driven him to the fire of hell, whilst he asks and laments for His help, calls on Him with the tongue of those who profess His Unity and beseeches Him for delivery from the Fire... but He leaves Him in the torment to be burnt by its flames, encompassed by its groaning, convulsed among its levels, and to be tortured by its keepers, while He, the Exalted, is aware of the sincerity of his love for Him, his profession of His Oneness, his taking refuge with Him, ?and his neediness to Him

Listen to these words, "Can You see Yourself -glory be to You O Allah, and Your's is the praise- hearing from within the Fire the voice

of a slave surrendered to You, imprisoned there because of his violations, suffering the pangs of its torment because of his disobedience, and confined within its levels because of his sin and crime, while he laments before You with the lament of one hopeful of Your mercy, calls upon You with the tongue of those who profess Your ?Oneness, and entreats You by Your Lordship

O my Protector, so how should he remain in the chastisement while he has hope for Your previous clemency? Or how should the Fire cause him pain while he expects Your bounty and mercy? Or how should its flames burn him while You hear his voice and see his place? Or how should its groaning encompass him while You know his weakness? Or how should he be convulsed among its levels while You know his ?sincerity

Or how should its keepers torture him while he calls out to You, "O Lord"? Or how should he have hope of Your bounty in freeing him from it while You abandon him within it? Far be it from You! That is not what is expected of You, nor what is well-known of Your bounty, nor is it similar to the goodness and kindness You have shown ".to those who professed Your Oneness

Lawful and Unlawful Requests

point

The following two questions hold utmost importance as far as the supplication is concerned. What should we pray for to Allah in our supplication? And what we should not ask from Allah in our

?supplication

A) Things we should pray for to Allah

point

Let us begin with the first question, that is, 'What should we pray for to Allah in our ''?prayers

Supplication denotes the neediness of man to Allah, the Exalted. There is not any limit with regard to the neediness and indigence of man to Allah, as there is no limit to the .richness, power and kindness of Allah

The confluence of these two infinite realities, the infinite need of the servant, and the .infinite self-sufficiency of Allah and His kindness, is what supplication is

On the one hand, there is no end to the treasuries of His kingdom, no limit to His power, strength, kindness and generosity. On the other hand, there is no limit to .man's indigence, weakness, inability and shortcoming

It is from this outlook that we will try to comprehend the things we should pray to .Allah for

(Blessings on Muhammad (S) and His Progeny ('a (1

point

Of the most important point during supplication, after praising and extolling Allah, is to send blessings on Muhammad (S) and his Progeny, Guardians of the affairs of the Muslims. Sending blessings on the Holy Prophet (S) and his Progeny occupies a large .part of the supplications (ad'iyah) that have reached us

There has been great emphasis and insistence in the Islamic traditions on blessing (salawat) the Prophet (S) and his Progeny ('a). There is a clear reason for this; for Allah, the Exalted, wants us to take supplication as a means of communication between the Muslims and the Guardians of their affairs, and as a means of their

holding

p: ۱۵۸

fast to the rope of Guardianship (wala') which Allah has made a protection for the .Muslims

Now, salawat is one of the significant ways of establishing this spiritual connection; for the links (halaqat) of Guardianship are extended between Allah and His servants, and the Guardianship of the Holy Prophet (S) and his Progeny ('a) is among the most .important of these links

The Guardianship (wala') of the Holy Prophet (S) is in extension to the Guardianship of Allah, the Exalted, whilst the Guardianship of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) is in extension to that of the Holy Prophet (S) . To consolidate and deepen one's relation with this Guardianship is to strengthen and deepen the bond with the Guardianship of Allah. This on its own is a wide doorway of knowledge (ma'rifah) which we can neither discuss it here briefly, nor talk about it in detail as worthy of it. Perhaps Allah will grant me the success (tawfiq) in future to talk on this important and crucial point in the .Islamic culture and in the establishment of the Islamic nation

There is great emphasis in the Islamic narrations on invoking blessings on the Prophet (S) and his Progeny ('a). In the following lines, we will cite some Islamic texts related to this topic. The most significant of these texts is the Book of Allah. He, the Exalted, says: "Indeed Allah and His angels bless the Prophet. O You who have faith! Invoke blessings on him and invoke peace upon

(him in a worthy manner."(۱

The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said, "Invoking blessings on me is a light on (the bridge (sirat)."(۲

Again he (S) has said, "The most stingy of the people is he who when I am mentioned (before him does not invoke blessings on me."(۳

Abdullah bin Na'im says: "I said to Abu 'Abdillah as-Sadiq ('a), 'I entered the sacred' House (al-bayt), but no prayer came to my mind except invoking blessings on Muhammad and his Progeny.' He said, 'Indeed no one has come out {of the House} ".with something better than what you have come out with

Imam al-Baqir and as-Sadiq ('a) are narrated to have said, "The weightiest of the things to be placed on the scale (mizan) on the Day of Judgement is the blessings on (Muhammad and his Progeny."(۴

Imam 'Ali ('a) says in Nahj al-Balaghah, "If you had a need from Allah, the Glorious, then begin with sending blessings on His Prophet (S) , then ask your need; for Allah is more generous than to accept one of the two requests made to Him and deny the (other."(۵

Praying for the prophets, messengers and their successors (awsiya') carries the same effect. Peace and blessings on the prophets and their successors have appeared in the Islamic sources generally, as they have appeared in particular and with names in many Transmitted Prayers (al-ad'iyat al-ma'thurah) from the Ahl al-Bayt ('a). Among these prayers is the one which has appeared in the a'mal of umm

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.Qur'an, ۳۳:۵۶ -۱

.Kanz al-'Ummal, hadith no.۲۱۴۹ -۲

.Ibid, hadith no.۲۱۴۴ -۳

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۷۱, pg.۳۷۴ -۴

۵- Nahj al-Balaghah, saying no.۳۶۱.

dawud during the bright nights (al-ayyam al-bid) of the month of Rajab. This supplication has reached us from Imam as-Sadiq ('a).

An Example of Invoking Blessings on Muhammad (S) and His Progeny ('a)

This benediction is part of a supplication in Sahifat as-Sajjadiyyah(1), "My Lord, bless Muhammad and the Household of Muhammad, the distinguished, the chosen, the honoured, the brought nigh, with the most excellent of Your blessings, benedict him with the most complete of Your benedictions, and have mercy upon him with the most enjoyable of Your mercies!

My Lord, bless Muhammad and his Household with a fruitful blessing, more fruitful than which there is no blessing! Bless him with a growing blessing, more growing than which there is no blessing! And bless him with a pleasing blessing, beyond which there is no blessing! My Lord, bless Muhammad and his Household with a blessing, which will please him and increase his good pleasure!

Bless him with a blessing, which will please You and increase Your good pleasure toward him! And bless him with a blessing through other than which You will not be pleased but for him, and for which You see no one else worthy!... My Lord, bless Muhammad and his Household with a blessing which will tie together the blessings of Your angels, Your prophets, Your messengers, and those who obey You, comprise the blessings of Your servants."

2) Praying for the Believers

This constitutes the greatest content of prayer after praising and extolling Allah, the Exalted, and after invoking blessings on Muhammad, his Progeny, the prophets and their successors.

Praying for the believers is one of the most significant dimensions

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1- Supplication no.۴۷.

of supplication; since it ties a Muslim individual to the whole of the Muslim nation on the face of the earth and throughout history, as invoking blessings on Muhammad and his Household connects a believer to the rope of Guardianship (wala') sent down .by Allah

This relation which a prayer establishes between an individual and the nation, on the one hand, and on the other hand, between an individual and the rest of the people with whom he interacts and is in contact with in one way or the other, is among the best kinds of relation. This is because such a relation comes into existence in the presence of Allah, the Exalted, and is in extension to the relation with Allah, and no one other than Him can comprehend it, as it is also a response from the servant to the .call of Allah, the Exalted

Praying for the believers can be of two kinds; a general prayer without taking names, and a specific prayer by taking names. We will have a look at both kinds, by the will of .Allah

a. Praying for the Believers in General

point

This is a prayer which Allah loves and answers, as He responds to prayers which follow this prayer; for Allah, the Exalted, is kinder than that He should discriminate in answering prayers, such that he should respond to part of a supplication and reject .the other part of it

This kind of prayer which includes all the believers at present and those who have preceded us in faith

Iman) gives rise to a sense of historical as well as a contemporary connection, a) horizontal and vertical link, with the family of the believers on the face of this earth and throughout history, and with the unity of this family, and with the close and strong .bond that ties us to this family

Supplication has two roles in our lives. Firstly, it links us with Allah, the Exalted; and secondly, it ties us to the Muslim nation, those who believe in Allah on the face of this .earth and those who believed in Him throughout history

There has appeared enormous emphasis in the Islamic narrations on this kind of supplication. According to a tradition, Allah, the Exalted, rewards a petitioner who makes such a prayer with good deeds (hasanat) according to the number of believers his prayer has included. Also, every believer that this prayer has encompassed shall intercede with Allah on his behalf on the Day of Judgement, when He, the Exalted, will allow the righteous among the believers to intercede on behalf of the wrongdoers .among them

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) says: "The Holy Prophet (S) has said, 'There is no believer who prays for the believing men and women except that Allah will give him in return the like of that which he had prayed for them, on behalf of every believing man and woman who has passed since the beginning of the world and who is going to come until the Day of Judgement. And

it will so happen that on the Day of Judgement a person shall be ordered to be taken to the hell fire, but then he will be taken away {from it, as} the believing men and women would say, 'O Lord, this is the man who used to pray for us. Accept our intercession on his behalf.' So Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, will accept their intercession, and hence he will be delivered."(1)

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) is related to have said, "Whoever says 'O Allah, forgive the believing men and women, and the Muslim men and women' twenty five times every day, then Allah shall write good deeds for him, erase his sins and elevate his station, according to the number of every believer who has passed, and according to the number of every believing man and woman who is still to come until the Day of Judgement."(2)

It is narrated from Imam al-Kazim ('a) that he used to say, "Whosoever prays for the believing men and women, and for the Muslim men and women, Allah will appoint for him on behalf of every believer an angel who shall pray for him."(3)

Imam ar-Rida ('a) has said, "There is no believer who prays for the believing men and women, and for the Muslim men and women, the living of them and the dead, except that Allah will write for him good deeds according to the number of every believing man and woman, from the time Allah sent Adam till the time the Hour

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۱ - Usul al-Kafi, pg.۵۳۵; al-Amali of at-Tusi, vol.۲, pg.۹۵; and Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.۱۱۵۱, hadith no.۸۸۸۹.

۲ - Thawab al-A'mal, pg.۸۸; and Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.۱۱۵۲, hadith no.۸۸۹۱.

۳ - Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.۱۱۵۲, hadith no.۸۸۹۳.

sets in."(1)

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) reports from his fathers who narrated from the Holy Prophet (S), "There is no believing man or woman, who has passed away since the beginning of the world or is yet to come until the Day of Judgement, except that they are intercessors for one who says in his prayer 'O Allah, forgive the believing men and women.'

And it will so happen that on the Day of Judgement a person shall be ordered to be driven to the hell fire, but then he will be taken away {from it, as} the believing men and women shall say, 'O our Lord, this is the man who used to pray for us, so accept our intercession on his behalf.' So Allah will accept their intercession, and hence he will be delivered."(2)

Imam ar-Rida ('a) says: "There is no believer who prays for the believing men and women, and for the Muslim men and women, the living of them and the dead, except that Allah will give him in return good deeds on behalf of every believing man and woman, from the time Allah sent Adam till the Hour sets in."(3)

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) narrates from his fathers who reported from the Holy prophet (S), "There is no one who prays for the believing men and women except that Allah will give him in return the like of that which he prayed for them, on behalf of every believing man and woman who has passed away since the

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1- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.۱۱۵۲, hadith no.۸۸۹۴.

2- Al-Amali of as-Saduq, pg.۲۷۳; and Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۹۳, pg.۳۸۵.

3- Thawab al-A'mal, pg.۱۴۶; and Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۹۳, pg.۳۸۶.

beginning of the world or is yet to come until the Day of Judgement. And it will so happen that on the Day of Judgement a person shall be ordered to be driven to the Fire, but then he will be taken away {from it, as} the believing men and women shall say, 'O our Lord, this is the man who used to pray for us, so accept our intercession on his behalf.' So Allah will accept their intercession, and hence he will be saved from the Fire."(1)

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) narrates from the Holy Prophet (S), "If anyone of you were to make a supplication, then let it be all-embracing; for such a supplication is closer to the response."(2)

He ('a) has also said, "If a person says 'O Lord, forgive the believing men and women, and the Muslim men and women, the living of them and the dead', Allah would return him with {the same} prayer according to the number of people who have passed away and who are yet to come."(3)

Examples of Generalization in Prayer

We will cite here a few examples of all-inclusive prayers from the supplications of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a).

1. "O Allah, enrich every poor person, O Allah, satisfy every hungry one, O Allah, clothe every unclothed one, O Allah, pay the debt of every indebted one, O Allah, relieve every distressed one, O Allah, return every stranger, O Allah, free every captive, O Allah, reform every wrong in the affairs of the Muslims, O Allah, cure every sick one,

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1- Thawab al-A'mal, pg.۱۴۶; and Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۹۳, pg.۳۸۶.

2- Thawab al-A'mal, pg.۱۴۷; and Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۹۳, pg.۳۸۶.

3- Falah as-Sa'il, pg.۴۳; and Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۹۳, pg.۳۸۷.

O Allah, fill our poverty with Your needlessness, O Allah, change our unpleasant state through Your beautiful state; O Allah, bless Muhammad and his pure Progeny."(۱)

۲. "O Allah, bestow richness and wealth on the poor among the believing men and women; health and comfort upon the sick among them; grace and honour on the living among the believing men and women; forgiveness and mercy on the deceased among the believing men and women; return the travelers among the believing men and women to their homes, safe and successful; with Your mercy O Most Merciful of the merciful; and bless, O Allah, our master Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets, and his pure Progeny, and send blessings on {them} and give them abundant peace."

۳. "O Allah, and bless the Followers (at-Tab'in), from this day of ours to the Day of Doom, their wives, their offspring, and those among them who obey You, with a blessing through which You will preserve them from disobeying You, make room for them in the plots of Your garden, defend them from the trickery of Satan, help them in the good on which they seek help from You, protect them from sudden events that come by night and day -except the events which come with good."(۲)

۴. Of these all-inclusive prayers is the supplication for the defenders of the frontiers of the Muslim lands, "O Allah, bless Muhammad and his Household, fortify the frontiers of the Muslims through Your might, support their defenders through Your strength, and lavish upon them gifts

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۱- Mafatih al-Jinan, supplications of the holy month of Ramadan.

۲- Sahifat As-Sajjadiyyah, supplication no.۴.

through Your wealth. O Allah, bless Muhammad and his Household, increase their number, hone their weapons, guard their territory, defend their midst, unite their throng, arrange their affair, send them supplies in a steady string, undertake Yourself to suffice them with provisions, support them with victory, help them with patience, and give them subtlety in guile! O Allah, bless Muhammad and his Household, give them the knowledge of that of which they are ignorant, teach them what they do not know, and show them what they do not see."(١)

۵. Another all-embracing prayer is the supplication for the apostolic strugglers among the Muslims, which is again from Sahifat as-Sajjadiyyah, "O Allah, and if the affair of Islam should worry a Muslim and the alliance of the idolaters' against Islam should grieve him, so that he has the intention to go to war and is about to enter the struggle, but frailty keeps him seated, neediness keeps him waiting, a mishap delays him, or an obstruction prevents him from his wish, write his name among the worshipers, make incumbent for him the reward of the strugglers, and place him among the ranks of the martyrs and the righteous."(٢)

۶. Also among these prayers is the one for those who assist the strugglers (mujahidin) behind the frontline, "O Allah, and if a Muslim should take the place of a warrior or a soldier in his home, attend to those left behind in his absence, help him with a portion of his property, assist him with equipment, hone him for the struggle, send along with him a supplication for his purpose, or guard his honour in his absence, reward him

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١- Ibid, supplication no.٢٧.

٢- Ibid, supplication no.٢٧.

(with the like of his reward measure for measure, like for like."(١)

The Three Forms of Prayer in the Qur'an

point

:The following three forms of prayer have appeared in the Qur'an

.The prayer of a person for himself .١

.The prayer of a person for others .٢

.The prayer of the all (jami') for all .٣

We shall discuss these three kinds of prayers in order to become acquainted with the .Qur'anic method of praying for the believers

The Prayer of a Person for Himself .١

This is a common way of praying. We find in the Qur'an instances for this kind of prayer which were either made by the prophets (anbiya') and the righteous people .(salihin), or they have been taught by Allah, the Exalted, to His servants

:Some of these instances are

- "My Lord, You have granted me a share in the kingdom, and taught me the interpretation of dreams. Originator of the heavens and earth! You are my guardian in this world and the Hereafter! Let my death be in submission {to You}, and unite me (with the righteous."(٢
- "My Lord, admit me with a worthy entrance, and bring me out with a worthy (departure, and render me a favourable authority from Yourself."(٣
- "My Lord, open my breast for me, make my affair easy for me, remove the hitch (from my tongue {so that} they may understand my discourse."(٤

- "My Lord, do not leave me without an heir, and You are the best of inheritors."(۵)
- "My Lord, land me with a blessed landing, for You are the best of those who bring ashore."(۶)
- "My Lord, I seek

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۱- Ibid, supplication no.۲۷.

۲- Qur'an, ۱۲:۱۰۱.

۳- Qur'an, ۱۷:۸۰.

۴- Qur'an, ۲۰:۲۵ ۲۷.

۵- Qur'an, ۲۱:۸۹.

۶- Qur'an, ۲۳:۲۹.

Your protection from the promptings of devils; and I seek Your protection, my Lord, from their presence near me."(1)

• "My Lord, grant me {unerring} judgement, and unite me with the righteous. Confer upon me a worthy repute among the posterity, and make me one of the heirs to the paradise of bliss."(2)

2. The Prayer of a Person for Others

This is another way of prayer which has several examples in the Qur'an.

• "My Lord, have mercy on them, just as they reared me when I was {a} small {child}."(3)

• Of these prayers is the prayer of the bearers of the throne ('arsh) for the believers, "Our Lord, You comprehend all things in mercy and knowledge, so forgive those who repent and follow Your way, and save them from the punishment of hell. Our Lord, admit them into the Gardens of Eden, which You have promised them, along with whoever is righteous among their forebears, their spouses and their descendents. Indeed You are the All-mighty, the All-wise. Save them from the ills; and whomever You save from the ills of that day, You will have had mercy upon him, and that is the great success."(4)

3. The Prayer of All for All

This is the most prevalent method of supplication in the Qur'an. Most of the supplications in the Qur'an are of this kind. Some of them are as follows:

• "Guide us on the straight path; the path of those whom You have blessed, such as have not incurred Your wrath, nor are astray."(5)

• "Our Lord, accept it from us; indeed You are the All-hearing, the

۱- Qur’an, ۲۳:۹۷ ۹۸.

۲- Qur’an, ۲۶:۸۳ ۸۵.

۳- Qur’an, ۱۷:۲۴.

۴- Qur’an, ۴۰:۷ ۹.

۵- Qur’an, ۱:۶ ۷.

(All-knowing."(١

• "Our Lord, give us good in this world and good in the Hereafter, and save us from the punishment of the Fire."(٢)

• "Our Lord, pour patience upon us, make our feet steady, and assist us against the faithless lot."(٣)

• "Our Lord, take us not to task if we forget or make mistakes. Our Lord, place not upon us a burden as You placed on those who were before us. Our Lord, lay not upon us what we have no strength to bear, excuse us and forgive us, and be merciful to us. You are our Master, so help us against the faithless lot."(۴)

• "Our Lord, do not make our hearts swerve after You have guided us, and bestow Your mercy on us; indeed You are the All-munificent."(۵)

• "Our Lord, we have indeed heard a summoner calling to faith, declaring, "Have faith in your Lord", so we believed. Our Lord, forgive us our sins and absolve us of our misdeeds, and make us die with the pious. Our Lord, give us what You have promised us through Your apostles, and do not disgrace us on the Day of Resurrection. Indeed You do not break Your promise."(۶)

• "Our Lord, pour patience upon us, and grant us to die as Muslims."(٧)

• "Our Lord, we have believed, so forgive us and have mercy on us, and You are the best of the merciful."(٨)

• "Our Lord, turn away from us the punishment of hell; indeed its punishment is enduring."(٩)

• "Our Lord, perfect our

١- Qur'an, ٢:١٢٧.

٢- Qur'an, ٢:٢٠١.

۳- Qur’an, ۲: ۲۵۰.

۴- Qur’an, ۲:۲۸۶.

۵- Qur’an, ۳:۸.

۶- Qur’an, ۳:۱۹۳ ۱۹۴.

۷- Qur’an, ۷:۱۲۶.

۸- Qur’an, ۲۳:۱۱۰.

۹- Qur’an, ۲۵:۶۵.

(light for us, and forgive us; indeed You have power over all things."(۱

An Analysis and Explanation of the Third Form of Prayer

What concerns us of these three modes of prayer is the second and the third form. Both forms are prayers for the believers, except that the second kind is a prayer of an individual for all, while the third kind is the prayer of all for all.

Both forms share some common characteristics:

۱. The 'one prayed for' (al-mad'uww lahu) are 'all'. The individual does not pray for himself, rather he prays for all. Sometimes, the prayer of an individual for himself is of no benefit, as in the case when the whole community becomes subject to the punishment of Allah including the supplicant himself, even though he might not have committed the sin which others have. Allah, the Exalted, says in this reagrd:

"And beware of a punishment which shall not visit the wrongdoers among you exclusively, and know that Allah is severe in retribution."(۲)

In such a case, the prayer of an individual and his seeking forgiveness for himself will be of no benefit. Here he ought to pray and seek forgiveness for all. Accordingly, if Allah removes the punishment from the rest, it would be removed from him as well:

"Our Lord, remove from us this punishment, indeed we have believed."(۳)

۲. The petitioner (ud-Da'i) represents 'all' in his prayer. For such a kind of prayer is oftenly made by the phrase 'Our Lord', which denotes that a supplicant represents all in praying for all, without him

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۱- Qur'an, ۶۶:۸.

۲- Qur'an, ۸:۲۵.

۳- Qur'an, ۴۴:۱۲.

separating himself from those he is praying for, as is the case in the second kind of prayer. Rather, he represents them and prays for them and sees himself amidst those .he is praying for

Such a supplication is the nearmost of supplications to the response (istijabah). For there are three possibilities here, either Allah, the Exalted, would reject it completely, or answer part of it and reject part of it, or answer the whole of it. But Allah, the Exalted, is kinder than that He should reject a prayer completely, as discrimination in granting a prayer does not behove the Generous. Therefore, there remains only the .third possibility which is granting the prayer in favour of all

The most beautiful thing in this mode of prayer is that the individual is a messenger to Allah on behalf of all. He represents them and addresses Allah on behalf of 'all', saying .('Our Lord' (rabbana

But even more beautiful than this is the fact that each of us grants himself the right to be a messenger to Allah on behalf of others. Thus, each of us is a messenger of the people to Allah in prayer. The way Allah has messengers whom He sends to the people, the people also have messengers who raise their petition and need to their .Creator. All the people act as messengers for all, and represent all

What is amazing of us is our attitude in this world, in the streets and markets, as we put between

us obstacles and barriers, and separate ourselves from the others, such that each of us has his limits and rights which he is not willing to give up or compromise on. Each of us represents but his self only, and does not represent others except through official permission. But the moment we elevate ourselves to Allah, the Exalted, through prayers (salat) and supplication, we break all these confines and none of us separates himself from the rest, rather each of us represents all.

Such a kind of representation is indeed the most wonderful and the most beautiful; all representing all in speech, call and prayer before Allah, Lord of the Worlds.

And what is even more beautiful than this is the fact that Allah, the Exalted, accepts such a representation from all on behalf of 'all', and does not reject or discard it. Rather, in such a state He grants to the call of the supplicant the power of representing the rest.

Hence, when anyone of us says in his prayers (salat) "Guide us on the right path"(١), it is as if all the people have collectively raised this prayer on behalf of all, asking Allah for guidance.

And this suffices to show the value of supplication during such a state; for the supplication of each of us during prayers carries the strength of the 'supplication of all for all'. At such moments, a prayer is efficient and powerful to the fullest degree to invoke Allah's mercy.

But even more

١- Qur'an, ١:۶.

beautiful than all this is the fact that there are supplications which a Muslim is required ".to make everyday, several times. Among such prayers is "Guide us on the right path

Praying for all has great significance by virtue of the fact that 'those prayed for' are the congregation of the believers. And this all-inclusiveness as far as 'those prayed .for' are concerned provides a prayer with enormous value in the eyes of Allah

In this mode of prayer, the supplicant does not raise his call to Allah as an individual; rather he is stretching toward Allah the hands of all the believers, their call and cry. He is representing all of them before Allah, while Allah accepts from him such a .representation

On the other hand, the believers themselves have given consent to the representation of each of them on behalf of the other. Therefore, the representation of an individual here is not a mere claim from him before Allah, rather it is a real kind of representation which is accepted by Allah, and also by those whom the individual is representing in prayer. Hence, it is an acceptable form of representation approved by .the Shari'ah also

Every prayer in this state holds the strength of a collective prayer. So when any of us prays before Allah and says "Guide us on the right path", then it is as if this prayer has been raised to Allah by all. This prayer, with such a level of strength and efficiency, is raised

daily by every Muslim who stands before Allah in prayers and supplicates for all on behalf of all. Everyday the Muslims raise this cry to Allah tens of times; a cry which has .endless strength in invoking Allah's mercy and affection

Yet, the most beautiful thing of all is the fact that it is Allah, the Exalted, Himself who has invited us to raise to Him such a cry everyday, tens of times. He is the one who has taught us to ask Him for guidance, and pray for the guidance of all. He is the one who taught us to represent the rest in this prayer, and He is the one who accepts from .us our representation of others

.After all this, is it then possible that He would not answer our prayer? Never

b. Praying for Particular Believers

point

The way praying for the believers in general has appeared in the Islamic sources, likewise there has appeared in these sources the concept of praying for them in .particular, by specifying them and naming them in person during prayer

This mode of prayer has a liveliness and an effect of its own on the heart of the supplicant, other than the liveliness and effect found in the prayer in general. This is because this kind of prayer eliminates what might have accumulated of grudge in the personal or communal relations of the people, or what might have piled up between .the congregations of the believers themselves

For when a believer beseeches Allah, the Exalted, for mercy

and forgiveness on behalf of his brethren, specifying them by their names, and asks Him to fulfill their wishes, ease their affairs, and grant their needs, then he would naturally develop liking for them, and that which he used to experience in his heart of jealousy, disliking, and aversion toward them, would disappear.

The prayer in such a state has three different aspects. The first aspect is that it connects the supplicant to Allah, the Exalted. The second aspect is that it ties him to the whole of the Muslim nation on the face of the earth and throughout history. The third aspect is that it links him with his brothers, associates and relatives, which indeed constitutes a wide arena of man's life.

The Islamic sources have given utmost importance to this form of prayer. Here, we will mention some of these narrations which have appeared in the works of ahadith.

۱. Praying for the Believers in their Absence

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) says: "The prayer of a person for his brother {in faith} in his absence showers sustenance (rizq) and averts calamities."(۱)

Imam al-Baqir ('a) has said, "The nearest prayer and the quickest of them to the respose (ijabah) is the prayer of a person for his brother in his absence."(۲)

Abu Khalid al-Qammat reports from Imam al-Baqir ('a), "The fastest of the prayers to the response (ijabah) is the prayer of a man for his brother in his absence. When he begins with the prayer for his brother, the angel appointed over him says: 'amin, and for you is

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۱- Usul al-Kafi, pg.۴۳۵; and Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.۱۱۴۵, hadith no.۸۸۶۷.

۲- Usul al-Kafi, pg.۴۳۵.

(twofold of that.'"(۱)

As-Sakuni relates from Imam as-Sadiq ('a) and he from the Holy Prophet (S) , "There is nothing faster in obtaining the response (ijabah) than the the prayer of an absent (gha'ib) for the absent."(۲)

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) narrates from his fathers and they from the Holy Prophet (S) , "O 'Ali! The prayer of four people is not rejected; a just ruler, {the prayer of} a father for his son, the prayer of a person for his brother in his absence, and {the prayer of} the oppressed, {about whom} Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, says: 'By My might and majesty, I will come to your aid even after a while.'"(۳)

The Holy Prophet (S) says: "Whosoever prays for a believer in his absence, the angel says: 'And for you is the like of that.'"(۴)

Hamran bin A'yan reports, "I went to see Imam al-Baqir ('a) and said to him, 'Advise me.' He said, 'I advise you to be God-conscious; and beware of joking {idly}, for it takes away the reverence (haybah) and dignity of a person. And you should pray (du'a') for your brothers {in faith} in their absence, for this showers sustenance (rizq)', and he repeated this three times."(۵)

Mu'awiyah bin 'Ammar narrates from Imam as-Sadiq ('a), "Praying for your brother in his absence drives sustenance toward the supplicant and averts calamities from him, and the angel says: 'And for you is the like of that.'"(۶)

۲. Praying for Forty Believers

There are narrations which emphasize on praying for forty believers by their names before one

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۱- Ibid.

۲- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.۱۱۴۶, hadith no.۸۸۷۰.

۳- Al-Khisal-of as-Saduq, vol.۱, pg.۹۲; and Man la Yahduruhu al-Faqih, vol.۵, pg.۵۲.

۴- Al-Amali of at-Tusi, vol.۲, pg.۹۵; and Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۹۳, pg.۳۸۴.

۵- As-Sara'ir, pg.۴۸۴; and Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۹۳, pg.۳۸۷.

۶- Al-Amali of at-Tusi, vol.۲, pg.۲۹۰; and Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۹۳, pg.۳۸۷.

.begins praying for himself

Ali bin Ibrahim narrates from his father, through his chain of narration, from Imam‘ as-Sadiq (‘a), “Whoever sends ahead in his supplication forty believers and thereafter (prays for himself, he shall be answered.”(١

Umar bin Yazid says that he heard as-Sadiq (‘a) saying, “Whoever prays for forty of‘ his brothers {in faith} before praying for himself, {then} he shall be answered in them (and himself.”(٢

Giving Preference to Others in Prayer .٣

Abu ‘Ubaydah reports from Thuwayr that I have heard ‘Ali bin al-Husayn (‘a) saying, “When the angels hear a believer praying for his brother in faith in his absence, or remembering him with good, they say, ‘What an excellent brother you are for your brother {in faith}; you pray for his good while he is away from you, and remember him with good. Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, has granted you twofold of what you had prayed for him, and has praised you double the amount you praised him; and (you have a higher degree (al-fadl) than him.”(٣

Yunus bin ‘Abd ar-rahman narrates that ‘Abdullah bin Jundab heard Abu al-Hasan al-Kazim (‘a) saying, “One who prays for his brother in faith in his absence is called from the corner of the heavens, ‘For each one {of that which you prayed for your brother} (you shall have a hundred.’”(۴

Ibn Abi ‘Umayr relates from Zayd an-Narsi, “I was with Mu’awiyah bin Wahab in the desert of ‘Arafah while he was supplicating. So I followed his prayer but I did not find him praying for himself even a

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Al-Majalis, pg.٢٧٣; Bihar al-Anwar, vol.٩٣, pg.٣٨۴; and Wasa’il al-Shi’ah, vol.۴, pg.١١۵۴, -١ .hadith no.٨٨٩٨

Al-Majalis, pg.٣٢٨; al-Amali, pg.٢٧٣; and Wasa’il al-Shi’ah, vol.۴, pg.١١۵۴, hadith - ٢

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Usul al-Kafi, pg.۵۳۵; Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۹۳, pg.۳۸۷; and Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, - ۳
.pg.۱۱۴۹, hadith no.۸۸۸۲

.Al-Rijal-of al-Kashhi, pg.۳۶۱ -۴

single letter. I rather found him praying for people in the remotest parts of the earth; .he named them and their parents until the people started moving

I said to him, 'O uncle, I have seen something astonishing.' 'What has amazed you of what you have seen', asked Mu'awiyah. I said, 'Your giving preference to your brothers over yourself in such a {holy} place, and your naming them person by person.' He said to me, 'Do not be surprised of this, my nephew; for I have heard my master... saying, 'Whoever prays for his brother in his absence, an angel from the lower heaven calls him saying, 'O servant of Allah, you have a hundred thousand of (what you have prayed {for your brother}..."(١

Imam Husayn bin 'Ali ('a) narrates from his brother al-Hasan ('a), "I saw my mother, Fatimah, standing in her prayer niche on Thursday night. She remained in the position of bowing (ruku') and prostration (sujud) till dawn. I heard her praying for the believing men and women by their names. She would copiously pray for them without praying for herself even a little. So I said to her, 'O mother, why do not you pray for yourself the way you are praying for others?' She replied, 'My son, the neighbour ({comes first}, then the family members (ad-dar)."(٢

Abu Natanah relates from 'Ali who reported from his father, "I saw 'Abdullah bin Jundab in the desert of 'arafah, and I did not see a position (mawqif) better than the one

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١- 'Uddat ud-Da'i, pg.١٢٩; Bihar al-Anwar: vol.٩٣, pg.٣٨٧; and Wasa'il al-Sh¢'ah, vol.۴, pg.١١۴٩, hadith no.٨٨٨٥.

٢- 'Ilal-al-Sharayi', pg.٧١.

he was in. He was stretching his hands toward the sky while tears flowed down his cheeks to the ground. After the people left, I said to him, 'O Aba Muhammad, I have '.not seen a position better than yours

He replied, 'By Allah, I did not pray except for my brothers, this is because Abu al-Hasan Musa bin Ja'far informed me that whoever prays for his brothers in their absence, he is called from the Throne ('arsh), 'And for you is a hundred thousand times more.' So I disliked leaving a hundred thousand-fold which is guaranteed for (one which I do not know whether it will be answered or not."(١

Abdullah bin Sinan is narrated to have said, "I passed by 'Abdullah bin Jundab and' saw him offering prayers at safa. He was an old man and I saw him praying as he said, 'O Allah! So and so son of so and so; O Allah! So and so son of so and so; O Allah, so and so son of so and so...' to the extent that I could not count them because of their great number. After he finished his prayers, I said to him, 'O 'Abdallah, I have never seen a position better than yours! But I disliked a quality in you.' He said, 'What '?is it that you disliked in me

I said, 'You pray for many of your brethren {in faith} but I have not heard you praying for yourself for anything.' He said to

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.Al-Amali of as-Saduq, pg.٢٧٣; and Bihar al-Anwar, vol.٩٣, pg.٣٨۴ -١

me, ‘O Abdallah, I have heard our master as-Sadiq (‘a) saying, ‘Whoever prays for his brother in faith in his absence, he will be called from the heavens, ‘O so and so, you will have what you have prayed for your brother a hundred thousand times more. So I did not like to leave a hundred thousand-fold which has been guaranteed for one which I do not know whether it will be accepted or not.”(١)

Abu ‘Umayr narrated from some of his associates, “When ‘Isa bin A’yan used to go for hajj and then go to ‘arafah, he would start praying for his brothers until people left {‘arafah}. So he was asked, “You spend your money and exhaust your body, but when you reach the place where the needs are presented before Allah, you start praying for your brethren and forsake yourself!” He replied, “I am confident of the {acceptance of the} prayer of the angel on my behalf, while I doubt in the prayer for myself.”(٢)

Ibrahim bin Abi al-Bilad (or ‘Abdullah bin Jundab) relates, “I was in ‘arafah, and as I was coming out I met Ibrahim bin Shu’ayb and so I greeted him. One of his eyes was injured, while his other eye had turned red as if it was a clot of blood. So I said to him, ‘One of your eyes is already afflicted, I fear for you the other one; reduce weeping a little.’ He said, ‘Nay by Allah! O Aba Muhammad, I have not prayed

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١- Falah as-Sa’il, pg.٤٣; and Bihar al-Anwar, vol.٩٣, pg.٣٩٠-٣٩١.

٢- Al-Ikhtisas, pg.٦٨; and Bihar al-Anwar, vol.٩٣, pg.٣٩٢.

for myself today even by a single supplication.' So I said, 'Then who did you pray for?' He replied, 'I prayed for my brothers; I have heard Abu 'Abdillah {as-Sadiq} saying, 'Whosoever prays for his brother in his absence, Allah appoints an angel over him who says {to him}, 'And for you is double {of that}.' So I wanted to pray for my brothers while the angel should pray for me; for I doubt in the {acceptance of the} prayer for myself whereas I do not doubt in the prayer of the angel on my behalf."(۱)

Praying for the Parents (۴

Praying for the parents is among the instances (maas-Sadiq) of 'doing good to the parents' (birr al-walidayn). However, there are different ways of being good to them, among them is that one should give charity (sadaqah), go to hajj and offer prayers on their behalf, and also pray for them.

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) is reported to have said, "What prevents anyone of you from doing good to his parents, whether they are alive or dead, by praying on their behalf, giving charity on behalf of them, going for hajj on their behalf, and fasting on their behalf. Hence, he will have the like of what he has done for them, and Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, shall copiously increase for him in good because of his goodness and maintaining the relationship))."

He ('a) has also said, "My father used to say, 'There are five prayers which are never veiled from Allah; the prayer of a just ruler,

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۱- Al-Ikhtisas, pg.۸۴; and Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۹۳, pg.۳۹۲.

the prayer of an oppressed {about whom} Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, says: 'I will take revenge on your behalf even if it is after sometime'; the prayer of a righteous son for his parents, the prayer of a righteous father for his son, and the prayer of a believer for his brother in his absence, {about whom the angel} says: 'And for you is (double of that.'"(۱)

Among the prayers for the parents is a prayer which has appeared in Sahifat as-:(Sajjadiyyah(۲)

O Allah, bless Muhammad, his Household, and his progeny, and single out my parents" for the best which You have singled out for the fathers and mothers of Your faithful servants, O Most Merciful of the merciful. O Allah, let me not forget to remember them after my ritual prayers, at every time throughout my night, and in each of the .hours of my day

O Allah, bless Muhammad and his Household, forgive me thorugh my supplication for my parents, forgive them through their devotion toward me with unfailing forgiveness, be well pleased with them through my intercession for them with resolute good pleasure, and make them reach through Your generosity the abodes of .safety

O Allah, if Your forgiveness reaches them first, make them my intercessors, and if Your forgiveness reaches me first, make me their intercessor, so that we may gather together through Your gentleness in the house of Your generosity and the place of ".Your forgiveness and mercy

Man's Prayer for Himself (۵

This is the last station of the prayer, not the

.Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.۱۱۵۳, hadith no.۸۸۹۵ -۱

.Sahifat As-Sajjadiyyah, supplication no.۲۴ -۲

first one. It is interesting how Islam urges man to deny himself and give preference to others in the life of this world, in matters related to one's life and also in dealing with others. As it also urges him to deny himself and give preference to others over himself .in his prayer before Allah, the Exalted

However, he should not forget to pray for himself. But what should we ask for ourselves? And how should we pray? This is what we will attempt to discuss here by .the will of Allah

Generalization in Prayer .۱

We ought to ask Allah in our prayer for whatever we are in need of, whatever is important for us in this world and the Hereafter, and beseech Him to protect us from all evil that we are wary of in this world and the Hereafter; for the keys of good and all its means are in the hand of Allah. Nothing can go against His will (iradah), nor can anything render Him unable, nor does He niggardly withhold the good and mercy from .His servants

If Allah, the Exalted, is not miser in giving or responding to his servant, then it is unsound, rather adverse, on the part of the servant to show miserliness in asking .from Allah and praying to Him

According to a Divine Narration, "Even if the first and the last of you, and the living and the dead of you, were to gather and each of them were to ask whatever he wished and I

were to grant his wish, {still} My kingdom would not diminish.”(۱)

Again according to a Divine Narration related by the Holy Prophet (S) , “Even if the inhabitants of the seven heavens and the earths were to ask me altogether and I were to grant each of them his wish, yet this would not diminish My dominion; and how can a kingdom whose custodian is Me diminish?”(۲)

The Holy Prophet (S) is also narrated to have said, “Ask Allah and ask copiously, for nothing is difficult for Him.”(۳)

According to a narration, “Do not regard that which you ask {from Allah} as too much; for what lies with Allah is even greater.”

The prayers that have reached us from the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) entail many instances of generalization in prayer, in asking for every good and seeking protection from every evil. Some of them are as follows:

۱. A prayer recommended to be recited after the obligatory prayers during the holy month of Rajab, “O He who gives a lot in exchange for a little, O He who gives to one who asks Him, O He who gives to one who does not ask him and does not know Him, out of His affection and mercy.

Give me, because of my request to You, all the good of this world and all the good of the Hereafter, and keep away from me, because of my request to You, all the evil of this world and the evil of the Hereafter, for indeed it

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۱- Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۹۳, pg.۲۹۳.

۲- Ibid, vol.۹۳, pg.۳۰۳.

۳- Ibid, vol.۹۳, pg.۳۰۲.

is not diminishing what is given by You, and increase me from Your bounty, O the Generous.”

۲. According to a supplication, “O Allah, I ask from You the keys and the seal of the good, its abundance, benefits and blessings; and {I ask You} that which I comprehend in knowledge, and that which my memory cannot enumerate.”

۳. “O He who is near in His highness, O He who is All-attentive in His nearness; bless Muhammad and the Household of Muhammad. O Allah, I beseech You for all the good of my religion, this world and the Hereafter; and I seek refuge with You from all evil.”

۴. “… and admit me into every good into which You have admitted Muhammad and his Household; and bring me out of every evil from which You have brought out Muhammad and his Household.”

۵. “… and be sufficient for me in what worries me of the affairs of this world and the Hereafter.”

۶. “O Allah, do not leave any of my sins unforgiven, nor any grief unremoved, nor any sickness uncured, nor any fault unhidden, nor any provision unincreased, nor any fear unprotected, nor any evil unrepelled, nor any wish –which You are pleased with and which is good for me- unanswered, O Most Merciful of all merciful.”

۷. “O He in whose hand are the measures (maqadir) of this world and the Hereafter, and the measures of victory and defeat, and the measures of richness and poverty, and the measures of good and evil, bless

Muhammad and the Progeny of Muhammad; and bless me in my religion which is the criterion of my affairs, and in my world within which lies my sustenance, and in my Hereafter to which is my return; and bless me in all my affairs… I seek refuge with You from the evil of the living and the dead, and I seek refuge with You from the ordeals of this world and the Hereafter."

۸. "I beseech You through the light of Your face by which the heavens have been illuminated, and by which the darkness has disappeared, and by which the affairs of the first and the last have been set aright, to bless Muhammad and the Progeny of Muhammad, and to set aright all my affairs, and never leave me on my own, even for a moment."

۹. The prayer of Imam Zayn al-'Abidin ('a) at dawn, "Be sufficient for me in all {my} worries, and decree for me the best, and bless all my affairs, and grant me all my wishes. O Allah, make easy for me that whose difficulty I fear, for making easy that whose difficulty I fear is easy for You; and smoothen for me that whose roughness I fear, and free me from that whose constraint I fear, and hold back from me that whose grief I fear, and keep away from me that whose tribulation I fear."

۱۰. A prayer at dawn, "…and grant me an all-embracing and all-inclusive mercy through which I can ask the

".good of this world and the Hereafter

۲. Great Needs Should not Stop us from Asking for Smaller Things

It might be shameful for us to ask small and inconsiderable things from each other, but when one turns toward Allah asking and entreating Him, the case is different, as praying for such things is no longer disgraceful, however small and inconsiderable they might be.

This is because Allah, the Exalted, comprehends in knowledge every need, weakness, inability, and defect of the supplicant. Nothing of our weaknesses and shortcomings are hidden from Allah, the Glorious, that we should be embarrassed of presenting them before Him the way we are usually ashamed of doing so in front of the others. Therefore, the great needs must not hinder us from praying to Allah for small and insignificant needs.

On the other hand, Allah, the Exalted, loves His servant to be linked to Him in all his needs and affairs, big or small, so that he may always be connected to Him. However, such a link cannot endure unless the servant feels himself in need of Allah in all his affairs and wishes, even for laces of his shoes if they get broken.

The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said, "Ask Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, whatever crosses your mind of your needs, even for the lace of {your} shoe; for if He does not make that easy, it would not become easy."

He (S) is also narrated to have said, "Ask Allah for all your needs, even for a broken lace."(۱)

In another tradition,

۱- Makarim al-Akhlaq, pg.۳۱۲; and Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۹۳, pg.۲۹۵.

the Holy Prophet (S) says: "Do not get waried of supplication (du'a'); for none has perished with supplication. Ask Allah even for the lace of your shoe if it gets broken; (and ask Allah of His grace, for He loves to be besought."(۱)

Sayf at-Tammar says: "I heard Abu 'Abdillah {as-Sadiq} saying, 'Keep on praying (du'a'), for indeed you cannot attain proximity {to Allah} with the like of it. And do not desist from asking for a small {thing} because of it being small, for the one who owns (the smaller is the very one who owns the bigger."(۲)

A Divine Narration says: "O Musa! Ask Me whatever you need, even for the fodder of (your cattle and the salt of your bread."(۳)

However, there is no need to remind the reader here that this principle of prayer does not mean that a prayer should not be accompanied with action and endeavour. Instead, it implies that firstly a supplicant should not place his confidence and hope in his efforts, rather he should maintain hope and confidence in Allah, the Exalted. Secondly, he must not sever his link and connection with Allah, nor should he lose the perception of his neediness toward Him, throughout his activity, action and .endeavour

Hence, the points just mentioned require man to ask Allah for all his needs and affairs, .even for the tie of his sandal, the fodder of his cattle, and the salt of his bread

Praying for the Great Bounties .۳

As we pray to Allah, the Exalted, for everything, we should

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۹۳, pg.۳۰۰ -۱

Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۹۳, pg.۲۹۳; al-Majalis, pg.۱۹; Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.۱۰۹۰, - ۲ .hadith no.۸۶۳۵; and Usul al-Kafi, pg.۵۱۶

.Uddat ud-Da'i, pg.۹۸ -۳

also pray to Him for great blessings. We should not consider a blessing as too big to be asked from Allah, however big it might be, so long as it is ontologically possible; for nothing is big for Allah, nor do His treasuries diminish however great His bestowal .might be

As we should not be ashamed of beseeching Allah for our small needs, even if it is for the fodder of cattle, lace of shoes and salt of bread, similarly we should not regard praying to Allah for His great blessings as asking too much from Him, however great .they might be

Rabi'ah bin Ka'b says: "One day the Holy Prophet (S) said to me, 'O Rabi'ah! You have served me for seven years; do you not want to ask a need from me?' I said, 'O Messenger of Allah, give me some time to think over it.' The next morning when I came to see him (S) , he said to me, 'O Rabi'ah, tell me your need.' I said, 'Ask Allah to '?admit me to the Heaven with you.' He said to me, 'Who taught you this

I said, 'No one, O Messenger of Allah. I thought over this and said {to myself}, 'If I asked him wealth, it will perish. And if I asked him a long life and children, their end would be death.' Rabi'ah says: 'He lowered his head for a moment and then said, 'I will do that, but help me by prostrating

sujud) much.’ {Rabi’ah} says: ‘Thereafter I heard him saying, ‘There will occur a) (dissension (fitnah) after me; if it occurs then adhere to ‘Ali bin Abi Talib (‘a).’”(۱)

Amir al-Mu’minin ‘Ali (‘a) says: “When the Holy Prophet (S) used to be asked do to something, if he was willing to do it then he would reply saying ‘Yes.’ But if he was not willing to do it, then he would remain silent, as he would never say ‘no’ to something. One day a Bedouin came to him and asked him for something, but he remained silent. The Bedouin repeated his request, but again he remained silent. He asked him for the third time, yet he remained silent.

Thereafter, he (S) said -as if he was continuing with his speech, ‘What do you want, O bedouin?’ So we said, ‘He is just now going to ask you {a place in} the Heaven.’ The Bedouin said, ‘I ask you to give me a camel, its saddle, and some provision.’ He (S) said, ‘I will give you that.’ Then he {turned toward us and} said, ‘What a difference between the request of the Bedouin and that of an old lady from the Banu Isra’il.’

Then he said, ‘When Musa was commanded to cross the sea and he neared it, the mounts were whipped to cross but they retreated.’ So Musa said, ‘O My Lord, what has happened to me?’ Allah said, ‘O Musa, you are at the grave of Yusuf, carry his bones.’

۱- Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۹۳, pg.۳۲۷.

The grave was as flat as the earth, so he asked his people, ‘Does anyone of you know where is it?’ They said, ‘There is an old woman {with us}, may be she would know.’ So .he said to her, ‘Do you know?’ She replied, ‘Yes.’ ‘Show it to us’, said Musa

She answered, ‘By Allah, I would not unless you grant me what I am going to ask from you.’ He said, ‘You will be granted.’ She said, ‘I want to be with you in the same postion that you will enjoy in the Heaven.’ He said, ‘Ask me for the Heaven {only}.’ ‘Nay by Allah, but that I want to be with you’, she said. So Musa began to deflect her from her wish when Allah revealed to him saying, ‘Grant her request; for she is not going to be contented with less than that.’ So he granted her request and she pointed (out the grave to him.”(١)

Reliance on the Divine Planning .۴

One of the things we should beseech Allah, the Exalted, in our prayers is that he should suffice us by His planning (tadbir) from our planning for ourselves, and that He should take care of our affairs through His mercy and wisdom, and that He should not .leave any of our affairs on ourselves

Imam al-Husayn (‘a) says in the supplication of ‘arafah, “{O Lord,} suffice me from planning for myself through your planning for me, and from my choice through Your ”.choosing for me

(A phrase in the whispered prayer (munajat

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol.٩٣, pg.٣٢٧ -١

of sha'baniyyah reads, "... and take charge of my affair as is worthy of You..." Another prayer says: "His knowledge of my condition suffices me from asking Him."(1)

It is said that when Namrud ordered his men to throw Prophet Ibrahim ('a) into the fire, the angel Jibra'il came to him and said, "Have you a need?" He replied, "But not from you. Allah suffices me; He is the best custodian." Thereafter, the angel Mika'il came to him and said, "If you wish, I can put out this fire; for the treasuries of rain and water are in my hand." He said, "I do not want." Then the angel of wind came to him and said, "If you want I can blow out the fire." 'I do not want", he replied. So Jibra'il said, "Then ask Allah." He said, "His knowledge of my condition suffices me from asking Him."(2)

However, this does not mean abstinence from praying to Allah, the Exalted, rather it means relying on the planning (tadbir) of Allah for His servant the way He deems suitable. This is, in fact, a state of relying on Allah in all affairs, and having confidence in the decree of Allah, His wisdom and planning, be it in ease or in difficulty.

In the supplication of 'arafah, Imam al-Husayn ('a) says: "O Allah, the difference in Your planning (tadbir) and the quick change in Your decree has prevented Your sevants, who have thorough knowledge of You, from being assured by a blessing, and to

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۱- Ibid, vol.۷۱, pg.۱۵۵.

۲- Ibid.

".despair of You during hardship

This is indeed among those subtle concepts that the supplications of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) are replete with. The Imam ('a) says that those of the servants of Allah who have attained recognition of Him never depend on a bounty, however enormous it might be; as they do not lose hope in Allah during difficulties, however severe it might be. This is after they have comprehended the quick succession and change in His command and decree in relation to His servants. Thus, they are never assured by a blessing or provision, nor do they despair of Allah's mercy during hardships. In other .words, they are, rather, assured of His mercy and do not despair of His grace

:This concept is drawn by the Imam ('a) directly from the Qur'an

So that you may not grieve for what escapes you, not exult for what comes your" (way."(۱

Imam 'Ali ('a) used to say, "The whole of zuhd {abstinence from worldly pleasures} has appeared in two phrases (kalimatayn) of the Book of Allah, "So that you may not ".grieve for what escapes you, not exult for what comes your way

When Allah, the Exalted, grants His servant with confidence in His destiny and decree, and with reliance on Him, then such a person will constanly be assured of the decree of Allah, in ease and hardship; he would neither be assured of the blessings at his .disposal, nor would he despair in times of difficulty

There has been

۱- Qur'an, ۵۷:۲۳.

enormous emphasis on this concept in different supplications. A phrase in the Ziyarat famously known as aminullah reads, "O Allah, let my soul be calm with Your decree, pleased with Your decision, fond of Your remembrance and of calling You, patient at the time of misfortune, and grateful for Your abundant bounties."

In one of his supplications, Imam 'Ali bin al-Husayn Zayn al-'Abidin ('a) says: "Inspire us to yield to that which You bring upon us by Your will, lest we love the delay of what You have hastened and the hastening of what You have delayed, dislike what You love, and choose what You dislike."(١)

In another place he ('a) says: "...delight my soul through Your decree, expand my breast through the instances of Your decision, give to me a trust through which I may admit that Your decree runs only to the best."(٢)

In the supplication of as-Sabah, Imam 'Ali ('a) says: "O Allah, here are the reins of my soul; I have tied them to the cord of Your Will."

۵. Pleading for the Face of Allah from Allah

Point

The most sublime and loftiest of the supplications is that one should pray to Allah, not for attaining this world or the Hereafter, but for achieving His honoured face (wajh allah), His pleasure (rida), meeting (liqa') with Him, His proximity (qurb), arriving (wusul) at Him, His love (hubb), intimacy (uns) with Him and yearning (shawq) for Him.

In one of her supplications, Lady Fatimah ('a) used to beseech Allah to give her, before her death, a glad tiding from Himself, not from other than Him; a glad tiding which would

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١- Sahifat As-Sajjadiyyah, supplication no.٣٣:۵.

٢- Ibid, supplication no.٣۵:٣.

delight her heart and make her happy. She would pray, "A glad tiding from You, not from other than You, {a glad tiding} which would delight my heart, please my soul, comfort me, brighten my face with joy... assure my heart, and by which my whole body would rejoice."(1)

Imam al-Husayn ('a) says in the supplication of 'arafah, "I beseech from You to reach You."

In the supplication of as-Sabah, Imam 'Ali ('a) says: "You are the climax of my wish and aspiration."

In the whispered prayer of al-muhibbin (the Lovers), of the fifteen whispered prayers of Imam Zayn al-'Abidin ('a), he says: "O Allah, who can have tasted the sweetness of Your love, then wanted another in place of You? Who can have become intimate with Your nearness, then sought removal from You?"

In the munajat of al-muridin (the devotees), he ('a) says: "O Allah, make us travel on the roads that arrive at You, and set us into motion on the paths nearest to reaching You."

Again, in the munajat of al-mutawassilin (those asking for mediation), he ('a) says: "... and place me among Your selected friends, those... whose eyes You have gladdened through looking at You on the day of meeting You."

A phrase in the supplication of 'arafah reads, "... and seek me until I reach You."

Imam 'Ali ('a) says in the supplication of kumayl, "And I seek intercession from You with Yourself... and bestow upon me earnestness in my fear of You, and continuity in my being joined to Your service

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۱- Falah as-Sa'il.

until… I move near to You with the nearest of the sincere… and gather in Your vicinity with the believers."

Imam Zayn al-'Abidin ('a) says in munajat al-muhibbin (the lovers), "O Allah, place us with him… whose heart You have captivated with Your will, whom You have picked for contemplating You, whose look You have made empty for You, whose breast You have freed for Your love, whom You have made desirous of what is with You… and from whom You have cut off all things which cut him off from You."

point

One of the goals of prayer is to strengthen the bond between members of the Muslim community and to cleanse their hearts of animosity and bitter feelings toward each other which normally occurs due to the pressures of the worldly life. And as we mentioned earlier, prayer for a Muslim in his absence is among these factors which lead to the mending of strained relations.

On the contrary, a negative stance in prayer which consolidates an unconstructive attitude in the relation of a Muslim with his brother is never liked by Allah. This is because Allah, the Exalted, loves the believers to pray in favour of each other, be it in their presence or absence, and give preference to each other in prayer and in asking their needs from Allah. In contrast to this, He does not like a believer to wish for the eradication of a blessing from his brother in faith, as we have just seen.

Similarly, Allah, the Exalted, does not like a believer to invoke evil upon his fellow believer, even if he has wronged or hurted him (so long as he is his brother in faith and has not crossed the limits of such a brotherhood by

.his wrongdoing), nor does He like His servants to speak ill of each other before Him

In his collection of prayers from tawrat(١), ar-rawandi relates a prayer in which Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, addressed His servant saying, "Whenever you are wronged, you call on Me against a servant among My servants because he wronged you. Then know that another servant of Mine is praying against you {in the similar way} because you have wronged him. If you want, I can answer you as I can answer him against you. And if you want, I can delay in responding to both of you until the Day (of Judgement!"(٢

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) has said, "When a man is wronged, and he begins to pray against the one who has wronged him, then Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, says: 'Here is another one praying against you, as he thinks that you have wronged him. If you wish, I can answer you as I can answer the prayer against you. And if you wish, I can delay (in responding to the two of you until My forgiveness embraces you both."(٣

Hisham bin Salim says: "I heard Abu 'Abdillah {as-Sadiq} saying, 'A wronged person (mazlum) may continue to invoke evil {upon the one who has wronged him} until he (himself becomes a wrongdoer (zalim)."(۴

Imam 'Ali bin al-Husayn ('a) says in a narration, "When the angels hear a believer speaking ill of his brother {in faith} and praying against him, they say to him, 'What a bad brother

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١- The Divine Book revealed to Prophet Musa ('a).

٢- Bihar al-Anwar, vol.٩٣, pg.٣٢۶.

٣- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.١١٧٧, hadith no.٨٩٧٢; and al-Amali of as-Saduq, pg.١٩١.

۴- Usul al-Kafi, pg.۴٣٨; 'Iqab al-A'mal, pg.۴١; and Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.١١۶۴, hadith no.٨٩٢۶.

you are for your brother. Stop, O one whose sins and faults have been concealed, have pity on yourself! And thank Allah who concealed {your sins}. Beware that Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, knows His servant better than you."(1)

Indeed Allah, the Exalted, is the peace (as-Salam), to Him returns the peace, from Him comes the peace, and His presence is the peace. Therefore, when we stand before Him, the Exalted, with hearts filled with peace, praying for each other, invoking His mercy for each other, and each of us giving preference to the other in attaining the mercy of Allah, we will succeed in attracting Allah's mercy, and it will embrace all of us together; for the mercy of Allah descends at places of love and peace, and upon the loving hearts of the believers; hearts which are at peace with one another.

Similarly, this would cause the ascension of our hearts, actions, prayers (salat) and supplications to Allah, for it is only the 'good word' (al-kalim at-Tayyib) and hearts inhabited by it that ascend to Allah, "To Him ascends the good word, and He elevates righteous conduct."(2)

But if we were to stand before Allah with conflicting hearts, filled with grudge and animosity, and empty of love and peace; and if we, the believers, were to raise our differences, problems, and complains to Allah, and He was to incite some of us against others, then the mercy of Allah, which embraces everything in the universe, would get cut-off from all

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1- Usul al-Kafi, pg.٥٣٥; and Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.٤, pg.١١٦٤, hadith no.٨٩٢٧.

2- Qur'an, ٣٥:١٠.

of us, and our hearts, actions, prayers (salat) and supplications, would not ascend to Allah.

Only those hearts which are filled with love can attract Allah's mercy, and can avert misfortunes (bala') and punishment from the believers. As the opposite is also true, for the conflicting hearts of the believers, hearts which are hostile toward one another, hinder Allah's mercy from them, and cause afflictions and punishment to befall them.

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) narrates from his fathers, and they from the Holy Prophet (S) , "When Allah, the Blessed, the Exalted, sees the inhabitants of a city to have exceeded the boundaries in wrongdoing, while amidst them are three believers, {then} He, the Majestic, calls out to them, 'O you who disobey Me, had it not been for the believers who are amidst you, loving each other under the shadow of My majesty, building My land and mosques with their prayers (salatihim), and pleading for forgiveness at dawn out of fear of Me, I would have indeed sent down punishment upon you."(۱)

Jamil bin Darraj narrates from Imam as-Sadiq ('a), "The love of a person for his brothers {in faith} is a merit for him near Allah. And he whom Allah inspires with the love of his brothers, then he is loved by Allah; and whoever is loved by Allah, He will give him his reward in the full on the Day of Judgement."(۲)

The Holy Prophet (S) has said, "My nation will continue to remain in good (khayr) so long as

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۱- Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۷۴, pg.۳۹۰.

۲- Thawab al-A'mal, pg.۴۸; and Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۷۴, pg.۳۹۷.

they love each other, give back the trusts (amanah), and give zakat. And there will come a time when their hearts will become malicious, while they will look good in their outward conduct. If Allah were to afflict them with a misfortune, they would invoke (Him the invoking of a drowning person, but they would not be answered."(١

Loving Hearts Cause Allah's Mercy

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) says: "When two believers meet each other and shake hands, Allah, the Exalted, sends down one part of the mercy upon them, while another ninty nine parts of that mercy are for the one who is more ardent in his love for his brother. If they stand, the mercy embraces them, and if they sit to talk to each other the guardian angels say to one another, 'Move away from them, as they might be talking ".{of a secret which Allah has concealed {from us

:(Ishaq bin 'Ammar reports from Imam as-Sadiq ('a

When two believers embrace each other the mercy of Allah surrounds them. If they" continue to do so, not intending {by it} the transitory wares of the life of this world, it is said to them, 'You have been forgiven, so start afresh {your life without sins}.' When they begin to inquire about each other, the angels say to one another, 'Distance yourself from them; for they {may} have a secret which Allah has concealed {from ".{us

Ishaq says: "{At this,} I said, 'May I be your ransom! {But} their conversation must be :recorded, for Allah, the Exalted, says

p: ۲۱۰

.Uddat ud-Da'i, pg.۱۳۵; and Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۷۴, pg.۴۰۰ '-۱

He says no word but that there is a ready observer beside him.'" {Ishaq} says: "Abu' 'Abdillah as-Sadiq ('a) took a deep breath and then he wept and said, 'O Ishaq! Allah, the Exalted, has ordered the angels to distance themselves from the two believers when they meet, out of reverence for them. And even if the angels do not record and know whay they say, but He knows and is heedful of it, the Knower of the secret and (what is still more hidden.'"(١)

Harbouring Deceit for the Believers Causes the Wrath of Allah

Among the things related to this subject and which impedes the supplicant as well as .his prayer from Allah is harbouring deceit (ghish) for the believers

The Holy Prophet (S) has said, "He who spends a night while he has in his heart {some kind of} deception toward his Muslim brother, then he has spent the night in the wrath of Allah, and he shall enter the morning in the wrath of Allah, unless he pleads for forgiveness and returns {to the right conduct}. And if he dies on the same state, he ".has died on a religion other than Islam

Harbouring Evil for the Believers Witholds the Deed from Allah

.Harbouring evil (su') for the believers hinders a deed from reaching Allah, the Exalted

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) says: "Allah will not accept a deed from a believer while he ".harbours evil for his brother in faith

Allah Never Looks at Those Who Hate the Believers

Imam 'Ali ('a) narrates from the Holy Prophet (S), "The wicked of the people is he who hates the believers and is hated by them; the scandal-mongers, and those who cause

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١- .Ma'alim al-Zulfa of Muhaddith al-Bahrani, pg.٣۴

a split between the beloved ones. They are those whom Allah shall not look at, nor shall He purify them on the Day of Judgement."(١)

B) Things We should not Pray for to Allah

point

We shall now talk about things we ought not to pray for. These are a number of things which we will extract from the Qur'an and the Hadith.

١. Petition in Contrary to the Norms of Allah in the Universe and Life

Prophet Nuh ('a) had prayed to Allah, the Exalted, to accept his petition in favour of his son and to save him from drowning, based on the promise of Allah to him that He would save his family; but Allah did not answer his prayer and rather rejected it by saying, "O Nuh, indeed he is not of your family", and admonished him not to repeat such a petition.

The Qur'an says:

"Nuh called out to his Lord and said, 'My Lord, my son is indeed from my family, and Your promise is indeed true, and You are the fairest of all judges.' He said, 'O Nuh, he is indeed not of your family. Indeed he is {a personification of} unrighteous conduct, so do not ask Me {something} of which you have

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١- Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.٢٥, pg.٢٠۴.

no knowledge. I advise you lest you should be among the ignorant.' He said, 'O Lord, I seek Your protection lest I should ask You something of which I have no knowledge. If You do not forgive me and have mercy upon me, I shall be among the losers.'"(١)

Prophet Nuh ('a) had the right to ask Allah for the salvation of those who were among his family members. But he had no right to ask for the deliverance of those who were not considered to be among his family, among them being his son who was, in reality, not of his family. This was the judgement of Allah, and hence Nuh ('a) had no right to beseech Allah against His laws and command.

Now let us see what the answer of Nuh ('a) was; the answer of a penitent servant who hastens to the pleasure of his Lord, and seeks His protection from asking Him something about which he has no knowledge, and makes his deliverance and success conditional to His mercy and forgiveness.

Understanding the norms (sunan) of Allah is indeed among the necessary requirements for making supplication. The function of prayer is not to break these norms and violate them, rather its function is to direct a person to invoke Allah within the framework His norms and laws.

The norms of Allah are always the manifestation of His ontological will (al-iradat at-Takwiniyyah), whereas the role of supplication is to try to attract the will of Allah, the

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١- Qur'an, ١١:۴۵ ۴٧.

:Exalted, in favour of the supplicant, not to move against it; for Allah, the Exalted, says

)and you will never find any revision in Allah's precedent (sunnah)."(١)..."

The system prevailing in the universe is the embodiment of Allah's will (iradah) such that the universe cannot be in order without it. Thus, it is not correct for the supplicant to ask for change in the will of Allah; for prayer is among the doors of Allah's mercy for .His servants, and the will of Allah is always in conformity with His mercy

No norm is different from the other, be it a universal, historical or social norm; for each norm represents His will, and His will is a manifestation of His mercy and wisdom .above which there is no mercy and wisdom

For instance, one of the Divine social norms is that the members in a given society depend on each other in terms of their worldly and religious needs. If this is the case, then it would not be appropriate for the supplicant to beseech Allah to make him independent of others and not to make him in need of them; for such a prayer indeed .stands in sharp contrast with the above norm and will of Allah

Imam 'Ali ('a) is reported to have said, "{One day} I prayed, 'O Allah, do not make me in need of anyone of Your creatures.' So the Prophet of Allah (S) said, 'O 'Ali! Never say such; for there is no one except

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.Qur'an, ٣٥:٤٣ -١

that he is in need of the people.' So I said, 'Then what should I say?' He replied, 'Say, 'O Allah, do not make me needy of the wicked among Your creatures.'"(1)

Shu'ayb narrates that once he told Imam as-Sadiq ('a), "I pray to Allah to make me independent of His creatures. He said, 'Allah has distributed the provision (rizq) of whoever He wishes in the hands of whoever He wills {among His creatures}. Rather ask Him to make you independent of such a need (hajat) which compels you to be in need of the mean among His creatures.'"(2)

Based on this understanding of prayer, we find that the Islamic texts clearly define the realistic sphere of supplication, taking it out of the unrealistic and imaginary realms. These texts emphasise on a very important reality regarding a Muslim's way of life; the way his efforts and activities ought to be real and far from fantasy, similarly his prayer has to be within the same realistic framework.

It is narrated that on old man from Sham once asked Imam 'Ali ('a), "Which of the supplications is the most erroneous?" He ('a) replied, "Praying for that which cannot happen."(3)

'That which cannot occur' is something which stands outside the framework of the common norms of Allah in human life. Hence, thinking about it and trying to achieve it is being unrealistic.

Imam 'Ali ('a) has said, "Whoever asks beyond his capacity (qadr) deserves to be deprived."(4)

I believe that 'asking beyond one's capacity' means asking for

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۱- Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۹۳, pg.۳۲۵.

۲- Usul al-Kafi, pg.۴۳۸; and Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.۴, pg.۱۱۷۰, hadith no.۸۹۴۶.

۳- Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۹۳, pg.۳۲۴.

۴- Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۹۳, pg.۳۲۷, hadith no.۱۱.

.the unrealistic wishes

Praying for Illegal Things .۲

As it is not appropriate to pray for things whose occurrence is not possible, likewise, it is not correct to pray for things which are illegal. Both these kind of prayers fall within the same category. The first one is going against the ontological (takwini) will of Allah, while the second is going against His legislative (tashri'i) will. He, the Exalted, says:

even if you plead forgiveness for them seventy times, Allah shall never forgive..." them..."(۱)

Imam 'Ali ('a) says: "Do not ask the impossible and the illegal."(۲)

Wishing the Eradication of Blessings from Others .۳

Among the things not permissible in prayer is the wish of the supplicant that Allah may transfer a blessing from someone else to him. Allah, the Exalted, says:

"Do not covet the advantage which Allah has given some of you over others."(۳)

Of course there is no objection that one should wish for a blessing from Allah and ask Him to bless him with the like of what He has blessed others, or even better than that. But what Allah dislikes for His servants is their constantly staring at what He has bestowed upon others of His bounties. He, the Exalted, says:

Do not extend your glance toward what We have provided certain groups of them as" a glitter of the life of this world..."(۴)

Allah does not love His servant to covet that He, the Exalted, may shift a blessing from others to him; for this involves desiring the deprivation of others from a blessing, and this is something which Allah does

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۱- Qur'an, ۹:۸۰.

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۹۳, pg.۳۲۴ -۲

.Qur’an, ۴:۳۲ -۳

.Qur’an, ۲۰:۱۳۱ -۴

not like for His servants. For such a desire implies narrow-mindedness as far as the wishes of the supplicant are concerned, something which Allah dislikes for His .servants

The power of Allah is all-embracing, and there is no end to His treasuries, and His kingdom has no limit. Thus, there is no objection for one to ask Allah for everything and to wish that He may grant him better than what He has granted others. A phrase in one of the supplications reads, "O Allah, give preference to me, and do not give ".preference to others over me

In the supplication of kumayl, Imam 'Ali ('a) says: "...and make me the most excellent of Your slaves in share with You, the nearest of them in station to You, and the most "... elect of them in proximity to You

Not only there is no objection in all this, rather Allah, the Exalted, loves such a prayer. But what He does not like is the wish of the servant that He may take away a blessing from others; for when Allah wills to bestow a blessing upon His servant, He does not .need to take it away from others and grant it to him

Abd ar-rahman bin Abi Najran says: "One day I asked Imam as-Sadiq ('a) about the' verse 'Do not covet the advantage which Allah has given some of you over others.' He said, 'One should not covet the wife or daughter of other person, rather he should wish

(the like of it.'"(1)

4. Petition Against the Advantage of the Supplicant

Praying against one's own advantage (maslahah) is among other things that one ought not to pray for. Since man is unaware of that which benefits him and harms him, whilst Allah, the Exalted, is All-knowing, He would either substitute answering his prayer with another blessing or with averting a calamity from him, or He would delay the response to the time when it is beneficial for him.

A phrase in the supplication of al-iftitah reads, "So I became habituated to call You trustingly and ask You familiarly, neither fearing nor scared, pointing out to You that because of which I turned toward You. Then if there was a delay {in Your response}, I would blame You due to my ignorance, and perhaps the delay was best for me, for You know the outcome of all affairs. I have not seen a more generous master, patient with a wretched slave, than You are with me, my Lord."

What a supplicant must do in such a condition is that he should pray to Allah and thereafter entrust all his affairs to Him and let Him decide for him what is of advantage to him. And if Allah did not respond to him or there was a delay in the response, then one should not blame Him, the Exalted.

For it is possible that the supplicant may have asked Allah, out of his ignorance, for what is in fact harmful to him, or he may have asked for evil in the

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۱- Tafsir al-'Ayyashi, pg.۲۳۹.

same manner as he asks for good and makes haste to acquire it. Allah, the Exalted, says in this regard:

"Man prays for evil as {avidly as} he prays for good, and man is overhasty."(1)

Among the things that Prophet Salih ('a) told the people of Thamud was:

"He said, 'O my people, why do you press for evil sooner than for good."(2)

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) has said, "...and you must know the ways to your salvation, so that you may not ask Allah for that in which lies your destruction, thinking that your salvation is in it. Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, says: 'Man prays for evil as {avidly as} he prays for good, and man is overhasty.'"(3)

5. Seeking Refuge from Test

In actual fact, it is not correct to seek refuge from trial (fitnah); for the spouse of a person, his children and wealth are all a kind of test. So it would not be right to seek Allah's protection from one's family and wealth. However, one can seek refuge with Allah, the Exalted, from deceptive and misleading tests.

Imam 'Ali ('a) is narrated to have said, "None of you should say 'O Allah, I seek Your protection from the test (fitnah)', for there is no one except that he is surrounded by tests. So whoever seeks refuge, he should seek it from the misleading (mudillat) tests; for Allah, the Exalted, says: 'Know that Your possessions and children are only a test.'(4)"(5)

Imam Abu al-Hasan an-Naqi ('a) narrates from his fathers, "Amir al-Mu'minin {'Ali} heard a man

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۱- Qur'an, ۱۷:۱۱.

۲- Qur'an, ۲۷:۴۶.

۳- Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۹۳, pg.۳۲۲.

.Qur’an, ۸:۲۸ -۴

.Nahj al-Balaghah, saying no.۱۶۲ -۵

saying 'O Allah, I seek refuge with You from the test.' {So} he remarked, 'I see you taking refuge from your wealth and children! Allah, the Exalted, says: "Indeed your possessions and children are a trial."(۱) You should say, 'O Allah, I seek Your (protection from the deceptive trials.'"(۲

Not to Invoke Evil Upon the Believers .۶

(Divine Love in the Supplications of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a

The Relation with Allah

Say, 'If your fathers and your sons, your brethren, your spouses, and your kinsfolk," the possessions that you have acquired, the business you fear may suffer, and the dwellings you are fond of, are dearer to you than Allah and His Apostle and to waging jihad in His way, then wait until Allah issues His edict, and Allah does not guide the (transgressing lot."(۳

The correct form of relation ('alaqat) with Allah, the Exalted, develops as a result of .the coming together of a number of harmonious elements

The Islamic sources reject the idea that the relation with Allah should be established based on a single element only, such as fear, hope, love, or humility. Rather they .regard such a relation as one devoid of equilibrium and harmony

There is a wide range of elements that make up the correct form of relation with Allah. Some of these have been mentioned in detail in the verses of the Qur'an, the .traditions and supplications

Some of these elements are: hope in Allah (raja'), fear of Him (khawf), pleading before Him (tadarru'), humility toward Him (khushu'), lowliness before Him (tadhallul), love of him (hubb), yearning for Him (shawq), intimacy with Him (uns), returning to Him (inabah), dedication to Him (tabattul), pleading for His forgiveness (istighfar), seeking protection from Him (isti'adhah), beseeching His mercy (istirham), total absorption in

۱- Qur'an, ۶۴:۱۴.

۲- Al-Amali of at-Tusi, vol.۲, pg.۱۹۳; and Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۹۳, pg.۳۲۵.

۳- Qur'an, ۹:۲۴.

Allah (inqta'), extolling Him (tamjid), praising Him (hamd), craving for Him (raghbah), obedience to Him (ta'ah), His servanthood ('ubudiyyah), His remembrance (dhikr), .(neediness to Him (faqr), and holding fast to Him (i'tisam

Imam 'Ali bin al-Husayn Zayn al-'Abidin ('a) says in a supplication, "O Allah, I ask You to fill my heart with love of You, awe of You, belief in You, faith in You, fear of You, and (yearning toward You."(١

A harmonious spectrum for establishing a relation with Allah is constituted of these various elements mentioned above. Each of these elements is to be considered a key to a door out of the doors of Allah's mercy and recognition (ma'rifah). For instance, beseeching Him for His mercy is the key to His mercy, as pleading for His forgiveness .is the key to His forgiveness

Moreover, each one of these elements is, in itself, to be regarded as a path leading toward Allah. Thus, one's yearning for Him, love for Him and intimacy with Him, is a path which leads one to Allah. Fear and awe of Him is another path leading to Him. Humility toward Him (khushu') is yet a third path to Him. Entertaining hope in Him and .invoking Him is also another path arriving at Him

Accordingly, one should make his way to Allah through different paths, not confining himself to one single path. This is because each of the above mentioned paths has its own kind of aroma, taste, perfection, and fruition in one's journey toward

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.Bihar al-Anwar, vol.٩٨, pg.٩٢ -١

.Allah which is not be found in other paths

As a result, Islam presents a pluralistic basis for the establishment of relation with Allah, the Exalted. However, this is a very wide topic in itself which we do not intend to discuss at the moment.

Love of Allah

The best of these elements, the most powerful, and the most efficient of them in binding one to Allah and strengthening his relation with Him is the 'love of Allah' (hubb allah). Among the different forms of relation with Allah, there is no form more powerful and effective than 'love' in consolidating the relation of a servant with Allah.

A comparison between the elements which make up the relation with Allah has appeared in a number of Islamic traditions. Some of them are as follows:

1. It is narrated that Allah, the Exalted, revealed to Prophet Dawud ('a) saying, "O Dawud! My remembrance (dhikr) is for those who remember Me (dhakirin), My paradise is for the obedient ones (muti'in), My love (hubb) is for those who yearn for Me (mushtaqin); while I am specifically for the lovers (muhibbin)."(1)

2. Imam as-Sadiq ('a) says: "Love is better than fear (khawf)."(2)

3. Muhammad bin Ya'qub al-Kulayni reports from Imam as-Sadiq ('a), "There are three types of worshippers ('ubbad); a people who worship Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, out of fear; this is the worship of the slaves. A people who worship Allah, the Blessed, the Exalted, for reward; this is the worship of the merchants. And a people who worship Allah, the

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1- Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۹۸, pg.۲۲۶.

2- Ibid, vol.۷۸, pg.۲۲۶.

All-mighty, the Majestic, out of love; this is the worship of the free people, and it is the best kind of worship ('ibadah)."(1)

4. Al-Kulayni also narrates from Holy Prophet (S), "The best of the people is he who is passionately in love with worship ('ibadah), embraces it, loves it from his heart, applies his body to it and attends to it, such that he is not bothered in which condition he is in this world, in difficulty or in ease."(2)

5. Imam as-Sadiq ('a) says: "The secret conversation of those who have attained thorough recognition of Allah ('arifin) revolves round three principles: fear (khawf), hope (raja'), and love (hubb). Fear is the subsidiary of knowledge ('ilm), hope is a subsidiary of certainty (yaqin), and love is a subsidiary of recognition (ma'rifah). The sign of fear is taking flight (harab) {from the anger of Allah}; the sign of hope is seeking (talab); and the sign of love is to give preference to the Beloved over everything other than Him.

Thus, when knowledge is actualized in the breast (sadr), he would have fear (khawf); and when the fear gets firm, he would take flight (harab); and if he takes flight, he would attain salvation (najat); and when the light of certainty shines on his heart, he would witness the grace (fadl), and when he is able to see the grace, he would become hopeful; and when he experiences the sweetness of {the state of} hope, he would seek (talaba); and if he

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1- Usul al-Kafi, vol.2, pg.84.

2- Ibid, vol.2, pg.83.

.(succeeds in seeking, he would find (wajada

When the light of recognition (ma‘rifah) is disclosed (tajalla) to the heart (fu’ad), the breeze of love is stirred up (haja); and when the breeze of love is stirred up, he would become intimate with the patronage (dilal) of the Beloved, and prefer him over everything other than Him, and carry out His orders.

The parable of these three principles is that of the holy Sanctuary (haram), the sacred Mosque (al-masjid), and the ka‘bah; whoever enters the haram would be safe from the creatures; and whoever enters the masjid his limbs would be guarded from being employed by him in sinning; and whoever enters the ka‘bah his heart would be protected from being occupied by him with the remembrance of other than Allah.”(١)

۶. The Holy Prophet (S) is related to have said, “Prophet Shu’ayb (‘a) wept out of love of Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, until he lost his sight…, so Allah revealed onto him saying, ‘O Shu‘ayb! If this was out of fear of the Fire, then I have protected you from it; and if it was out of eagerness for the Heaven, then I have permitted you {to enter it}.’ So he said, ‘O Allah, O my Master, You are aware that I did not weep out of fear of Your fire, nor out of eagerness for Your heaven, but {because} Your love has engaged my heart such that I cannot endure {it} until I see You.’ So Allah, the

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١- Misbah al-Shari’ah, pg.۲۳.

Majestic, revealed to him saying, 'If this is the case, then because of this I will make the one who spoke to Me (kalimi), Musa bin 'Imran, to be at your service."(1)

7. A phrase in the book of Prophet Idris ('a) read, "Blessed are a people who worshipped Me out of love, and took Me as {their} lord and nourisher, and kept awake at night and persisted during daytime in acquiring My pleasure without fear or eagerness, nor out of fear of the Fire or aspiration of the Heaven, but due to {their} sincere love, firm resolution, and detachment from all other Me."(2)

Imam al-Husayn ('a) says in the supplication of 'arafah, "Blind is the eye which does not see You watchful over itself, and the bargain of a servant for whom You have not allotted a share from Your love is in loss."(3)

Belief and Love

It has appeared in the Islamic sources that belief is nothing but love. Imam al-Baqir ('a) says: "Belief (Iman) is love (hubb) and hatred (bughd)."(4)

Fudayl bin Yasar reports, "I asked Abu 'Abdillah {as-Sadiq} about love and hatred whether they are part of belief. He replied, 'And is Iman other than love and hatred?'"(5)

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) has also said, "Is religion (din) other than love? Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, says: 'Say, 'If you love Allah, then follow me; Allah will love you.'(6)"(7)

Imam al-Baqir ('a) is reported to have said, "Religion is the love, and love is the religion."(8)

The Pleasure of Love

If worship is out of love, eagerness and yearning,

1- Bihar al-Anwar, vol.12, pg.380.

۲- Ibid, vol.۹۵, pg.۴۶۷.

۳- Ibid, vol.۹۸, pg.۲۲۶.

۴- Ibid, vol.۷۸, pg.۱۷۵.

۵- Usul al-Kafi, vol.۲, pg.۱۲۵.

۶- Qur'an, ۳:۳۱.

۷- Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۶۹, pg.۲۳۷.

۸- Nur at-Thaqalayn, vol.۵, pg.۲۸۵.

then there is no pleasure and sweetness above it. Imam Zayn al-'Abidin ('a), who is among those who had tasted the sweetness of love and remembrance of Allah, says: "O Allah... how pleasant is the taste of Your love, and how sweet is the drink of Your proximity."(١)

Indeed such a sweetness and pleasure dwells in the hearts of the friends (awliya') of Allah. It is not something which occurs to them at times and goes away at other times. When the sweetness of the love of Allah settles in the heart of a person, then such a heart is the one inhabited by the love of Allah. And Allah shall never punish a heart inhabited by His love and in which the sweetness of His love has settled.

Imam 'Ali ('a) says: "O Allah, by Your might and glory, I have loved You with a love whose sweetness has settled in my heart. And the hearts of those who confess Your Oneness cannot believe that You hate Your lovers."(٢)

Imam 'Ali bin al-Husayn ('a) says regarding this steady and established state of the Divine love, "By Your might, O my Master, even if You drive me away, I will not leave Your door, and I will not cease to compliment You, because of what I have come to know of Your generosity and kindness."(٣)

This is one of the most eloquent expressions describing the profundity of love and its abiding in the heart, such that it would not disappear from it or

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١- Bihar al-Anwar, vol.٩٨, pg.٢۶.

٢- Munajat Ahl al-Bayt, pg.٩۶ ٩٧.

٣- Bihar al-Anwar, vol.٩٨, pg.٨۵.

change even if his Master were to drive him away and distance him from His proximity. And far it is from Him that He should do that with a servant in whose heart .His love has dwelt

When one experiences the taste of the love of Allah, and the pleasure of intimacy with Him, he would not prefer anything over Him. Imam Zayn al-'Abidin ('a), the leader of the lovers, says: "O Allah, who can have tasted the sweetness of Your love, then wanted another in place of You? And who can have become intimate with Your (nearness, then sought removal from You?"(١

The reason behind the difference of the people in relation to their goals and views about life is that they are deprived of the pleasure of the love of Allah. Otherwise those who have experienced such a pleasure do not seek anything else in life after .this

In the supplication of 'arafah, Imam Husayn bin 'Ali ('a) says: "What has he found one (who has lost You? And what has he lost one who has found You?"(٢

Imam Zayn al-'Abidin ('a) seeks forgiveness from Allah for every pleasure other than the pleasure of the love of Allah, and for every occupation other than the remembrance of Allah, and from every happiness other than that of the proximity to Allah; not because Allah has prohibited His servants from all this, rather because of the fact that all this is the result of the distraction of one's heart from Allah, and of

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.Bihar al-Anwar, vol.٩۴, pg.١۴٨ -١
.Ibid, vol.٩٨, pg.٢٢۶ -٢

its occupation with other than His remembrance even for a short time; whereas a heart which has experienced the pleasure of the love of Allah is never distracted from .Him

In fact, the dynamic force behind every action and endeavour in the life of the friends of Allah is the love of Allah, the Exalted, His remembrance and obedience. Anything beside this is seen as diversion from Allah. Hence, Imam as-Sajjad ('a) seeks Allah's forgiveness for all this and says: "I pray forgiveness from You for every pleasure other than that of Your remembrance, and for every ease other than that of intimacy with You, and for every happiness other than that of proximity to You, and for every (occupation other than obeying You."(١

Love Compensates the Deficiency of the Deed

Love is never dissociated from action ('amal). The sign of he who has fallen in love is action, activity and endeavour. However, on the other hand, love compensates the inability of a deed and mediates for the performer of that deed, as love is an effective .intercessor before Allah, the Exalted

In his lofty supplication at dawn famously known as the supplication of abu hamzah ath-thumali, Imam al-Zayn al-'Abidin ('a) says: "My recognition, O my Master, is that which guides me to You, and my love is my intercessor to You, and I trust my evidence since You have guided me {to it}, and I am comfortable with my intercessor since You (will accept it."(٢

(In fact, the best of evidences (dalil) and intercessors (shafi') are recognition (ma'rifah

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١- Ibid, vol.٩۴, pg.١۵١.

٢- Ibid, vol.٩٨, pg.٨٢.

and love (hubb). Accordingly, one whose evidence to Allah is ma‘rifah shall never be misguided, and he whose intercessor with Allah is hubb shall never fail to reach the .Divine presence

Imam ‘Ali bin al-Husayn, (‘a) says: “O Allah, You are indeed aware that though my obedience to you has not been persistent in practice, but it has endured in love and ”.determination

These words are in fact a subtle indication to the fact that one’s obedience (ta’ah) to Allah may at times fall short of the desired standard, and, as a result, it might not be possible for him to rely upon his obedience of Allah. But that in which the lovers (muhibbin) never entertain doubt is their certainty (yaqin) in that they do love Allah, the Exalted, and their determination (‘azm) on moving on the path of love and .obedience

And one who has experienced the love of Allah within himself would never doubt in this fact; for it is possible that a servant may show negligence in obeying Allah practically, as sometimes he may embark on something which is disliked by Allah; but that which is not imaginable, even while he is indulged in the wrongdoing, is his dislike .for Allah’s obedience and his love for sinning

In short, the bodily parts may slip and fall into sins, as shaitan and one’s own lowly desires (hawa) may gradually entice them into it; or they may fall short of the desired degree of obedience. But what is certain

is that nothing other than the love of Allah, the love of obeying Him, and the abhorrence of disobedience to Him, enters the heart of the righteous ones (salihin).

The above point is brilliantly reflected in the following phrase of a supplication, “O Allah, I love obeying You even though I have fallen short of it; and I dislike disobeying You even though I have embarked on it; so be gracious to me in granting me the Heaven.”(1)

And this is in fact the split between the bodily instruments (jawarih) and the instruments of the soul (jawanih). The bodily parts sometimes fail to accompany the instruments of the heart, but the jawanih of the righteous ones solely belong to Allah and always succumb to the love of Allah.

However, if the heart (qalb) attains a higher state of purity and sincerity, then the bodily parts would have no way but to obey and submit to it. Rather, in such a case, the bodily instruments would abide with what the instruments of the soul command them and want from them. At this point, the split between the jawarih and the jawanih shall disappear as a result of the sincerity the heart has attained.

Love of Allah Protects Man from the Punishment

If sins cause a person to fall in the eyes of Allah and expose him to His punishment, the love of Allah protects one from His chastisement.

Imam ‘Ali bin al-Husayn Zayn al-’Abidin (‘a) says in a whispered prayer (munajat), “O Allah, my sins have indeed frightened me, but my

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1- Ibid, vol.٩۴, pg.١٠١.

love of You has given me protection."(1)

Levels of Love

The hearts of people are at different levels and stages in relation to the love of Allah. Among the instances of love is a love which is so superficial and weak that it remains unnoticed even by the lover himself. And yet among its instances is the love which fills the heart of a person such that it does not leave any empty space in it for other things, things which people take as amusement and which occupy their time from the remembrance of Allah.

There is another level of love in which one is not satisfied with the remembrance of Allah and with standing before Him; the thirst of his heart is not quenched by remembering Him, invoking Him, praying to Him, and performing good deeds for His sake, however long his standing and prayer before Him might be.

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) says in a supplication, "My Master, I am hungry of Your love such that I can never feel satiated; and I am thirsty of Your love such that it cannot be quenched. Oh my yearning for He who sees me while I am unable to see Him."

In the whispered prayer of al-muftaqirin (the utterly poor), Imam Zayn al-'Abidin ('a) says: "Nothing will... cool my burning thirst but reaching You, quench my ardour but meeting You, damp my yearning but gazing upon Your face."(2)

Among the other signs of the love of Allah is passionate love (walah) and burning thirst (hiyam) for Him.

۱- Ibid, vol.۹۴, pg.۹۹.

۲- Ibid, vol.۹۴, pg.۱۴۹.

A phrase in the Ziyarat of aminullah reads, "O Allah, indeed the hearts of those who surrender to You are full of passionate love."

In his munajat of adh-dhakirin (the rememberers), Imam Zayn al-'Abidin ('a) says: "O Allah, love-mad hearts are enraptured by You... hearts find no serenity except in remembering You, souls find no rest except in seeing You."(١)

This is, in fact, the characteristic of the love-mad hearts and those burning in Allah's love that they do not find rest and security except in Allah's remembrance.

And among the more beautiful and more profound kind of love is what we find in the words of Amir al-Mu'minin 'Ali bin Abi Talib ('a) in the supplication of kumayl. He says: "...Then suppose, O Allah, my Master, my Protector and my Lord, that I am able to endure Your chastisement, how can I endure separation from You? And suppose that I am able to endure the heat of Your Fire, how can I endure not gazing upon Your generosity? Or how can I dwell in the Fire while my hope is Your pardon?"

This expression is among the most brilliant gestures of love and the most sincere of it; assume that a servant could endure the punishment of the Fire of his Master, how can he bear His separation and anger? A lover may endure the punishment of his Master, but he cannot endure His anger and outrage. As he might bear the fire of hell which is the most severe of

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١- Bihar al-Anwar, vol.٩۴, pg.١۵١.

the punishments, but he cannot bear separation from Him. And how can a servant be at rest amidst the fire of hell while he hopes that his Master would turn to him ?favourably and rescue him from it

Of the magnificent picture presented in this lofty supplication is that ‘love’ and ‘hope’ are two things which never part the heart of the servant of Allah, even at the time .when he is being driven into the fire of hell as a result of the wrath of Allah

A servant might love his Master while he is drowned amidst His bounties and grace. This is indeed a form of love. But a love above which there is no love is the one in which love and hope do not part the heart of a servant even when he is admitted to .the punishment of his Master

Imam ‘Ali bin al-Husayn Zayn al-’Abidin (‘a) says in the supplication of abu hamzah ath-thumali, “By Your might, O my Master, even if You were to drive me away, I would not leave Your door, and I would not cease to compliment You, because of what I have come to know of Your generosity and the vastness of Your mercy. To whom can a servant go apart from his Master? Whom can a creature seek refuge with other ?than his Creator

O Allah, even if You tied me with the chains {of hell}, and deprived me from among the people {present on that day} Your

flowing streams {of favours}, and pointed out my scandals to the eyes of Your servants, and ordered me to the Fire, and separated me from the righteous ones, {still} I would not lose hope in You, nor would I dismiss my anticipation of Your ”...pardon, nor would Your love depart from my heart

This is the most pure and sincere form of love, hope and aspiration which does not depart from the heart of the servant of Allah even if he is tied in chains, deprived of .the favours of Allah, and his misdeeds disclosed by Him before the people

Now let us continue to study the remarkable forms of love and hope described by :Imam ‘Ali (‘a) in the supplication of Kumayl

By Your might, O my Master and Protector, I swear sincerely that if You were to “ leave me with speech, I would lament before You, from the midst of inhabitants of the Fire, with the lamentation of the hopeful; I would cry to You with the cry of those crying for help; I would weep before You with the weeping of the bereft; I would call upon You: ‘Where are You, O Sponsor of the believers, O Goal of the hopes of Your knowers, O Aid of those who seek assistance, O Friend of the hearts of the sincere, .and O Lord of the worlds

Tell me -glory be to You O Allah, and Your’s is the praise, can You hear from the Fire the voice of a slave

imprisoned in it because of his disobedience, suffering the pangs of its torment because of his wrongdoings, and confined within its levels because of his sin and crime, while he {still} laments before You with the lament of one hopeful of Your mercy, calls upon You with the tongue of those who profess Your Oneness, and ?entreats You by Your Lordship

O my Master, so how could he remain in the punishment while he has hope for Your previous clemency? Or how could the Fire cause him pain while he expects Your bounty and mercy? Or how could its flames burn him while You hear his voice and see his place? Or how could its groaning encompass him while You know his weakness? Or how could he be convulsed among its levels while You know his sincerity? Or how could its keepers torture him while he calls out to You: O Lord? Or how could he have ?hope of Your grace in freeing him from it while You abandon him in it

Far it be from You! That is not what is expected of You, nor what is well-known of Your grace, nor is it similar to the goodness and kindness You have shown to those who have professed Your Oneness. So I declare with certainty that were it not for what You have decreed about punishing Your deniers, and what You have decided about making those who stubbornly resist You abide {in the Fire} forever, You would have made the

".Fire, all of it, cool and safe, and no one would have had a place and abode in it

Once a respected friend of mine told me that heroism and bravery stem from the very person of 'Ali ('a), such that they do not part him even during prayers before the Lord of the worlds. Here he is, imagining in the supplication kumayl that the Fire has embraced a sinful servant and surrounded him from all sides, still he does not stay quiet and submit to the chastisement, as is the case with he who has been encircled by the punishment and surrounded by its keepers. Rather, he laments, cries out, .shouts and calls out

Do not you see how he describes this situation while invoking Allah? "By Your might, O my Master and Protector, I swear sincerely that if You were to leave me with speech, I would lament before You, from the midst of inhabitants of the Fire, with the lamentation of the hopeful; I would cry to You with the cry of those crying for help; I would weep before You with the weeping of the bereft; I would call upon You: 'Where "...are You, O Sponsor of the believers

I said to him that you have not been able to get the right taste of the speech of 'Ali ('a); for if he was intending to say what you have understood, then he would not have said in the beginning of this part of his speech "If You

leave me with speech..." As for me, I regard the inner state of 'Ali ('a) -while he utters these words before Allah- as that of a small child who has not known a place of refuge and protection in this world but the affectionate, kindness, love, and the compassion of her mother; such that whenever something befalls her or harms her, she would immediately seek refuge with her mother and call for her help.

Likewise, if she were to make a mistake that would expose her to her punishment, then she would look around herself for a shelter. And if she could not find any place of refuge other than her mother, she would take shelter in her and ask for her help, in the same manner as she would do in the case when a stranger intends to harm her.

This is precisely the state of 'Ali ('a) in this supplication. He ('a) had learned with his great heart and the vast horizons of his insight to take refuge with Allah, the Exalted, and call Him for help; as he ('a) did not know anyone other than Him as a refuge and shelter.

He, the Glorious, is his only shelter and refuge, as he does not know anyone other than Him. Accordingly, when he imagines that Allah has surrounded him with His punishment, he does not hesitate, even for a moment, to take refuge and shelter with Him, and ask for His help and aid, as he used to

do every time. Is not He, the Glorious, his only refuge and shelter? If He is, then why should he be hesitant this time to ask for His help?!

Describing this point, Imam Zayn al-'Abidin 'Ali bin al-Husayn ('a) says in the munajat of at-Ta'ibin (the repenters), "O Allah… if You cast me out from Your door, in whom shall I take shelter? If You repel me from Your side, in whom shall I seek refuge?...O Allah, does an escaped slave return but to his Master? Or does anyone other than Him protect him from His anger?"(١)

Also in the supplication of abu hamzah ath-thumali, he ('a) says: "And O my Master, I seek refuge with Your grace, and I escape from You to You." (٢) In another place he says: "To whom shall a servant go beside his Master? And with whom other than his Creator shall a creature take refuge?"(٣)

"Escaping from Allah to Allah" is among the subtle meanings and concepts in the 'relation' of a servant with Allah, as the sensation described by 'Ali ('a) in the relation of a servant with Allah is among the most subtle and sincere of the 'feelings' of love and hope in the hearts of the lovers.

What is worthy of note here is that in this phrase of the supplication, 'Ali ('a) is not employing a poetic language by taking help of the imagination (khiyal) to complete the painting of this beautiful picture in this supplication. Rather, he is absolutely sincere in

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١- Bihar al-Anwar, vol.٩۴, pg.١۴٢.

٢- Ibid, vol.٩٨, pg.٨۴.

٣- Ibid, vol.٩٨, pg.٨٨.

expressing before Allah his feelings and sensations. And it is for this very reason that immediately after bringing in the concept of the ‘servant’s call for help to his Lord’ he follows it with that of ‘Allah’s help to His servant’.

Based on what we know of Allah’s mercy and grace, it is not possible for Him to disappoint such a sincere and pure feeling of love and hope of the servant, rejecting his ‘love’ for Him and dashing his ‘hope’ in Him. With regard to this, Imam ‘Ali (‘a) says: “...How could he remain in the punishment while he has hope for Your previous clemency?

Or how could the Fire cause him pain while he expects Your bounty and mercy? Or how could its flames burn him while You hear his voice and see his place? Or how could its groaning encompass him while You know his weakness? Or how could he be convulsed among its levels while You know his sincerity? Or how could its keepers torture him while he calls out to You ‘O Lord’?”

Is it then possible that the keepers of the hell fire would drive him to the Fire and torture him in it, while he calls out ‘O Lord’ and seeks shelter in Him with the tongue of those who profess His Oneness? Nay! What has preceded in our lives of His clemency and grace sharply and absolutely negates this.

Interestingly, the Imam (‘a) argues through the clemency of Allah for His clemency, and

through His grace for His grace, "…while he has hope for Your previous clemency?" The Imam ('a) is decisive regarding this side of the issue, that is, the 'decsending part' in the relation of Allah with His servant, as he is equally decisive and assertive regarding the other side of the issue, that is, the 'ascending part' in the relation of a .servant with Allah

Thus, as he was decisive in the fact that the hearts which have tasted the sweetness of His love and hope would never part with it, and would never seek another love and hope in place of the love of Allah and hope in Him, even if the punishment of Allah were to encircle these hearts; similarly, he is decisive in the fact that Allah cannot disappoint such a true love and hope which dwells in the hearts of the truthful ones .((as-Sadiqin

Just contemplate the determination, decisiveness, and clarity in the speech of 'Ali ('a), "Far it be from You! That is not what is expected of You, nor what is well-known of Your grace, nor is it similar to the goodness and kindness You have shown to those .who have professed Your Oneness

So I declare with certainty that were it not for what You have decreed about punishing Your deniers, and what You have decided about making those who stubbornly resist You abide {in the Fire} forever, You would have made the Fire, all of it, cool and safe, and no one

".would have had a place and abode in it

We find this determination and decisiveness in other words of 'Ali ('a) also when he talks about the ascending order of the relation, that is, the relation of the servant with his Master, as well as the descending order of the relation, that is, the relation of the Master with His servant.

In his famous whispered prayer, he addresses Allah, the Exalted, and says: "O Allah, by Your might and majesty, I have indeed loved You with a love whose sweetness has settled in my heart. And the hearts of those who confess Your Oneness cannot believe that You hate Your lovers."(۱)

In the munajat of al-kha'ifin, Imam 'Ali bin al-Husayn ('a) says: "O Allah, a soul which You have exalted by its professing Your unity, how will You humiliate it with the humiliation of Your separation; and a heart which is inhibited by Your love, how will You burn it in the heat of Your fire?"(۲)

In his prayer at dawn during the holy month of Ramadan, famously known as the supplication abu hamzah ath-thumali, Imam as-Sajjad ('a) says: "Would You, O Allah, ever disappoint our thoughts or let down our hopes? Nay, never, O Most Generous, this is not how we think about You, nor is it what we expect from You. O Allah, we have a greater and ever lasting hope in You, we have a great hope in You..."

The State of Yearning and Intimacy in Love

Love manifests itself in two ways; at times, it manifests itself in

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۱- Munajat Ahl al-Bayt, pg.۶۸ ۶۹.

۲- Bihar al-Anwar:, vol.۹۴, pg.۱۴۳.

form of ‘yearning’ (shawq), and at other times, in form of ‘intimacy’ (uns). Both states are a description of ‘love’, with the difference that the state of shawq occurs to the lover when he is away from the beloved, while the state of uns occurs to him when he .is in the presence of the beloved

The above two states occur to the heart of a person in relation to Allah, the Exalted. This is because Allah has two kinds of disclosure (tajalli). Sometimes He discloses :Himself for a person from a distance, and at times He does so from a close up

who is far and thus cannot be seen, but is close and thus witnesses secret...“ (conversations...”(۱

If Allah discloses Himself to a person from a distance, the state of ‘yearning’ occurs to him; and if He discloses Himself to him from close up such that he feels himself in the :presence of his Master, as the Qur’an says

,(And He is with you wherever you may be”(۲“

,(And We are nearer to him than his jugular vein”(۳“

,(When My servants ask You about Me, {tell them that} I am indeed nearmost”(۴“

.then the state of ‘intimacy’ occurs to him

In the supplication of al-iftitah, which has reached us from Imam al-Hujjah al-Mahdi (‘aj), there has appeared an accurate portrayal of the above two states, “All praise is due to Allah whose curtains can never be opened, and whose doors can never be ”...locked

No doubt the one whose curtains can never

.The supplication of al-Iftitah -۱

.Qur’an, ۵۷:۴ -۲

.Qur’an, ۵۰:۱۶ -۳

.Qur’an, ۲:۱۸۶ -۴

be opened is the very one whose door can never be closed. But it makes great .difference in understanding Allah through this perception or that

Moreover, there are two kinds of veil (hijab), the veil of darkness, and the veil of light. Some of the time, what prevents one from seeing through is pitch dark and the .(intensity of the darkness. This is the veil of darkness (hijab al-zulmah

But at other times, what stops one from seeing through is the intensity of light and its brilliance, as one cannot see the sun, not because of a barrier, but due to the intensity .(of its brilliance. This is the veil of light (hijab an-nur

The veils of darkness in the relation of man with Allah are love of this world (hubb ad-dunya), committing sins, and that which sullies the heart; whilst the veil of light within this relation is something different. This is the veil which, according to Imam al-Hujjah .('aj) in the supplication of al-iftitah, can never be opened

It is this veil which stirs up yearning (shawq) and longing (lahfah) in the hearts of the servants of Allah. Speaking of this yearning for Allah, Imam 'Ali bin al-Husayn Zayn al-'Abidin ('a) says in the whispered prayer of al-muridin (the devotees), "O Allah, nothing will cool my burning thirst but reaching You, quench my ardour but meeting You, damp my yearning but gazing upon Your face, settle my settling place without closeness to You, allay my worry but Your repose, cure

my illness but Your medicine, eliminate my grief but Your nearness, heal my wound ...but Your forgiveness, remove the rust on my heart but Your pardon

O utmost Hope of the hopers, O ultimate demand of the askers, O Highest desire of the desirers, O patron of the righteous, O Security of the fearful, O Responder to the supplication of the distressed, O Storehouse of the destitute, O Treasure of the (pitiful..."(۱)

In contrast to this disclosure, there is another type of disclosure, that is the disclosure of Allah to His servants without closing a door between them and Him, such that He listens to their secret prayer while He is nearer to them than their jugular vein, He intervenes between a man and his heart, and nothing of what enters into their hearts .is concealed from Him

Here it is that a servant feels that he is in the presence of his Master, and fears going against His commands and disobeying Him, develops intimacy with His remembrance, and finds tranquility in invoking Him and whispering to Him, prolongs His .remembrance, secret prayer to Him, and standing before Him

In a Divine Narration (hadith al-qudsi), Allah, the Exalted, says to some of His messengers, describing their prayer to Him in the darkness of the night while people are asleep, "Had you only seen them praying to Me in the darkness while I have become incarnate before their eyes, addressing Me while I am far above to be seen, and talking to

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.Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۹۴, pg.۱۵۰ -۱

Me while I cannot be {physically} present."(1)

As a result, a servant would not get wearied of standing before Allah, nor would he feel the passing of time. Have you not seen a man in the presence of a beloved whom he is fond of, does he get tired or perceive the passing of the time? Then what would be the case if a person feels that he is in the presence of Allah, hearing His speech and seeing Him, while He is with him, "And He is with you wherever you may be."(2) Thus, he would attain tranquility and rest only in the remembrance of Allah, "The hearts find rest in Allah's remembrance."(3)

Imam al-Mahdi ('aj) says in the supplication of al-iftitah, "So I began to call You trustingly, and ask You familiarly, neither fearing nor scared, pointing out to You that because of which I turned toward You."

No doubt that this state of intimacy with Allah, finding rest with Him, feeling safe under His shelter, is a state which springs forth from the feeling that one is in the presence, proximity and company of Allah, the Exalted. This is the best of the states a servant could ever be in before Allah. However, this state does not represent everything as far as the relation of man with Allah is concerned; rather the state of intimacy with Allah must be accompanied by the state of shawq (yearning) so that it may reach completion, be balanced and well-coordinated.

These two states

1- Liqa' Allah, pg.١٠١.

2- Qur'an, ٥٧:٤.

3- Qur'an, ١٣:٢٨.

are distinct in the worship (‘ibadah) of the friends of Allah and the righteous ones, as they are distinct in their relation with Him. Thus, some of the time the attribute of shawq and longing (lahfah) for Allah is dominant over their worship and relation with Him; while at other times the attribute of intimacy (uns) and rest (sukun) becomes dominant over their worship, remembrance, and relation with Allah. And sometimes both attributes may dominate their worship, which is in fact the best and the healthiest of states, and the nearmost to the state of equilibrium and harmony in the .relation with Allah

Hammad bin Habib al-’Attar al-Kufi says: “We came out as pilgrims, and we left Zubalah at night. We were struck with a dark sandy storm as a result of which the caravan got dispersed. I lost my way in that desert and land until I reached an uninhabited valley. When night fell, I took shelter in an ordinary tree. When it got completely dark, I suddenly saw a young man coming, wearing white tattered .garment, with fragrance of musk emanating from him

So I said to myself, ‘This is one of Allah’s friends.’ Whenever he sensed any movement from me, I feared that he would go away, thus stopping him from a lot that he intended to do. So I hid myself as much as I could. He came near to the place and prepared himself for prayers. Then he stood up praying while he said, ‘O

He who has taken everything under His control, and who has conquered everything by His power; make the joy of turning toward You enter my heart, and admit me to .the domain of those who obey You...' Then he began to offer prayers

In the final hours of the night, he stood up and said, 'O He whom the seekers had aspired and found Him to be {their} guide, and the fearful sought refuge in and found Him to be full of grace, and the worshippers took shelter in Him and found Him to be the bestower {of favours}. When did he who erected his body for other than You find ease? And when has he become happy one who aspired other than You in intention? O Allah, the darkness is disappearing while I have not been able to accomplish even a little of Your service, and my whispering to You has been but inconsiderable. Send {Your} blessings on Muhammad and his Progeny, and do to me what is worthy of You ".'out of the two things(١), O Most Merciful of the merciful

Hammad says: "I feared that his person may escape me and his trace may remain hidden to me, so I clinged to him and said to him, 'By him who has got you rid of the weariness and has bestowed upon you intent yearning and the pleasure of desire (raghbah)... who are you?' He said, 'Since you have sworn, I am 'Ali bin al-Husayn bin 'Ali bin Abi

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.That is, forgiveness and punishment -١

(Talib.'"(1)

Al-Asma'i says: "One night I was circumambulating the ka'bah when I suddenly saw a handsome young man, clinging to the cover of the ka'bah saying, 'The eyes have slept; the stars have risen, and You are the Sovereign, the Living, and the Self-subsistent. The kings have closed their doors and kept guards over them, while Your door is open for the petitioners. I have come to You so that You may look at me with Your Mercy, O Most Merciful of the merciful.' Then he began reciting the following :verses

O He who answers the distressed in the darkness, O He who removes adversity and ,affliction during sickness

Your visitors around the House have all slept, And You alone, O Self-subsistent, have ,not slept

I call upon You, O my Lord, with a calling You have ordered, Have mercy on my ,lamentation for the sake of the House and the haram

If he who has committed excesses against his own soul should not hope for Your "'?pardon, Then who else will bestow his bounties upon the sinfuls

Al-Asma'i says: "I followed him in his tracks and found him to be Zayn al-'Abidin (('a)."(2)

:Tawus al-Faqih narrates

I saw him worshipping and circumambulating from the evening until dawn. When he" saw that there was no one, he looked at the heavens and said, 'O Allah, the stars of Your heavens have fallen in, and the eyes of Your servants have slept, and Your doors are open for the petitioners. I have come to You so that You

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.Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۴۶, pg.۷۷ ۷۸ -۱

.Ibid, vol.۴۶, pg.۸۰ ۸۱ -۲

may forgive me, and have mercy upon me, and show me the countenance of my grandfather Muhammad (S) in the courtyard of the Day of Judgement.'

Then he wept and said, 'By Your might and majesty, I did not intend to violate Your {commands} by committing sins, and I did not disobey You when I disobeyed out of doubt in You, nor out of ignorance of Your chastisement, nor exposing myself to Your punishment, but my soul prompted me, and Your protective veil which made me live in ease assisted me over that; and now from Your retribution who will rescue me?

And to whose rope do I hold on fast if You were to cut off Your rope from me? How disgracing it would be to stand before You tomorrow, when it would be said to those with light weight, 'Go through', and to those burdened {with sins}, 'Stop'. Will I pass with those whose weight is light, or will I have to stop with those burdened? Woe unto me, my sins increased as I lived longer, but I did not repent; has not the time come for me that I should feel ashamed of my Lord?'

Then he wept and began reciting:

Shall You burn me with the Fire -O the Highest Desire, Then what happened to my hope and what happened to my love {of You}?

I have come to You with disgracing and miserable deeds, As there is not amidst the creatures one who has committed the

.like of my crime

Then again he wept and said, ‘Immaculate are You, You are disobeyed as if You do not see, and You are so clement that as if You are not being disobeyed, You display Your love for Your creation by bestowing upon them Your favours as if You were in need of them, while You, O my Master, have no need of them.’ Then he fell to the ”.ground prostrating

Tawus says: “I went near him, held his head and put it on my lap. Then I wept to the extent that my tears flowed over his cheeks, so he sat upright and said, ‘Who is it who has distracted me from the remembrance of my Lord?’ I said, ‘It is me, Tawus. O son of the Prophet of Allah, what is all this fear and fright? Are we required to do the like of this, as we are disobedient and sinful? Your father is Husayn bin ‘Ali, your mother is ’.(Fatimah al-Zahra’, and your grandfather is the Messenger of Allah (S

So he turned toward me and said, ‘Never, never, O Tawus! Stop talking about my father and my mother and my grandfather. Allah has created the Heaven for he who obeys Him and performs good deeds, even if he were to be a slave from Abyssinia. And He has created the Fire for he who disobeys Him, even if he were from the .Quraysh

Have you not heard the word {of Allah,} the Exalted, “And when

the trumpet is blown, there will be no ties between them on the day, nor will they ask {about} each other."(۱) By Allah, nothing is going to benefit you tomorrow except that (which you have sent ahead of the good deeds.'"(۲

:Habbah al-'Arani reports

While Nawf and I were sleeping in the courtyard of the castle, we suddenly found" ourselves with Amir al-Mu'minin ('a) in the last quarter of the night. He had put his hand on the wall looking confused, while he recited, "Indeed in the creation the "...heavens and the earth

Then he continued to recite these verses and he walked by as if he had lost his senses. He said, 'Are you asleep, O Habbah, or are you awake?' I said, 'I am awake; if you do all this then what about us?!' So he lowered his gaze and wept, and thereafter he said to me, 'O Habbah, indeed Allah has a stand (mawqif), and we have a stand before Him; so nothing of our deeds is hidden from Him. O Habbat, indeed Allah is nearer to you and me than the jugular vein. O Habbah, nothing can hide you and me from Allah.' Then he said, 'Are you asleep, O Nawf?' 'No, O Amir al-Mu'minin, I am not .asleep. I have prolonged my lamentation tonight', he replied

Then he advised and admonished us and said in the end, 'Beware of {disobeying} Allah. I have indeed warned you.' Thereafter, he started walking and saying, 'Would that I knew in

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.Qur'an, ۲۳:۱۰۱ -۱

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۴۶, pg.۸۱ ۸۲ -۲

my state of negligence (ghafalati) whether You have turned away from me, or are looking at me? Would that I knew what is my condition during my sleep and my being ungrateful to Your blessings on me?'"

Habbah continues, "By Allah, he remained in this state until the rising of the dawn."(۱)

In fact, the supplications and whispered prayers transmitted to us from the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) are rich in such lively and dynamic illustrations, describing the the state of intimacy (uns) and yearning (shawq). This is true, in particular, about the fifteen whispered prayers that 'Allamah al-Majlisi has narrated in al-Bihar from Imam Zayn al-'Abidin 'Ali bin al-Husayn ('a), which are replete with such concepts as 'intimacy' and 'yearning'. We find in the heritage of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) a treasure of such illustrations and concepts that we seldom find in the heritage of others.

We will mention here some of these unique illustrations before we conclude our discussion.

۱) "O Allah, who can have tasted the sweetness of Your love, then wanted another in place of You? Who can have become intimate with Your nearness, then sought removal from You? O Allah, place us with him whom You have chosen for Your nearness and Your friendship, purified through Your affection and Your love, given yearning for the meeting with You, made pleased with Your decree, granted gazing upon Your face, shown the favour of Your good pleasure,

given refuge from separation from You and Your loathing, settled in a sure sitting

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۱- Falah as-Sa'il of Sayyid Ibn Tawus, pg.۲۶۶.

place in Your neighbourhood, singled out for true knowledge of You, made worthy for worship of You, whose heart You have captivated with Your will, whom You have picked for contemplating You, whose look You have made empty for You, whose breast You have freed for Your love, whom You have made desirous of what is with You, inspired with Your remembrance, allotted thanksgiving to You, occupied with obeying You, turned into one of Your righteous creatures, chosen for whispered .prayer to You, and from whom You have cut off all things which cut him off from You

O Allah, place us among those whose habit is rejoicing in You and yearning for You, whose time is spent in sighing and moaning, their foreheads are bowed down before Your mightiness, their eyes are wakeful in Your service, their tears flowing in dread of .You, their hearts fixed upon Your love, their cores shaken with awe of You

O He the lights of whose holiness induce wonder in the eyes of His lovers, the glories of whose face arouse the longing of the hearts of His knowers. O Furthest Wish of the hearts of of the yearners, O Utmost Limit of the hopes of the lovers, I ask from You love for You, love for those who love You, love for every work which will join me to Your nearness, and that You make Yourself more beloved to me than anything other than You, and make my love for You lead

to Your good pleasure, and my yearning for You protect against disobeying You, oblige me by allowing me to gaze upon You, gaze upon me with the eye of affection (and tenderness, turn not Your face away from me..."(۱

The verses of this prayer are overflowing with concepts of love, yearning and intimacy. I do not intend here to comment on this prayer, for I will never be able to add to its verses any beauty apart from what they contain, nor an eloquence better than what they entail. I am not among those either capable of commenting on the master pieces from the verses of various supplications, and the verses of love or .literature

The first thing which draws our attention in the verses of the above supplication is the 'call' with which the Imam ('a) is calling out his Lord, "O Furthest Wish of the hearts of the yearners, O Utmost Limit of the hopes of the lovers...", "O He the lights of whose holiness induce wonder in the eyes of His lovers, the glories of whose face arouse the "...longing of the hearts of His knowers

The Imam ('a) has three requests in this prayer; the great three which a servant asks .from his Lord

Firstly he asks from Allah to choose him for Himself, and purify his heart for His love, .۱ make empty his look for His noble face, and make him desirous of what is with Him, and free his breast for His love, inspire him with

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.Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۹۴, pg.۱۴۸ -۱

His remembrance, cut off from him all that which cut him off from Him, and turn from .him all that which turn him away from Him

Such a start is essential for the move that the Imam (‘a) is asking from Allah, whose goal he defines as gazing upon the face (wajh) of Allah. It is not possible for a person without such a start to move through this difficult and tedious path to the climax of meeting with Allah and gazing upon His honourable face, which is indeed the source of .ease for every prophet and friend of Allah

If looking at the face of Allah is a provision (rizq) which Allah provides for whomsoever He wishes and chooses from among His servants, then the servant must ask Allah to provide him such a provision together with its keys; for when Allah provides any of His servants with a provision, He gives him through its doors and keys, and facilitates for .him its causes and means

On the contrary, those who pray to Allah to grant them a provision from other than its doors and without its proper means are in fact beseeching Him against His norms .(sunan) and laws which He has ordained for His servants

The doors (abwab) from which man enters and from which he sets out to the climax of :meeting with Allah (liqa’ allah) and gazing at His face are as follows

First: To free the heart from every sully, want, love and worldy attachment. This

stage is termed by the scholars as that of at-Takhliyah (to empty), that is emptying the heart from every want and attachment to other than Allah.

The Imam ('a) says in this regard, "Place us with him whom You have...purified for Your affection and love...whose look You have made empty for You, whose heart You have freed for Your love...and from whom You have cut off all things which cut him off from You."

This is the first step of the starting point which entails a negative (salbi) meaning.

Second: at-Tahliyah (embellishment of the soul with good qualities) as it is termed by the 'ulama" in contrast to at-Takhliyah. This step involves a positive meaning and is referred to by the Imam ('a) in his following requests, "Make me among those whom You have... made pleased with Your decree... singled out for true knowledge of You... made worthy for worship of You... made desirous of what is with You, inspired with Your remembrance, allotted thanksgiving to You, occupied with obeying You, turned into one of Your righteous creatures, chosen for whispered prayer to You...", and, "Make us among those... whose foreheads are bowed down before Your mightiness, their eyes wakeful in Your service, their tears flowing in dread of You... and their cores shaken with awe of You."

This starting point, with both steps, is the key of the movement toward Allah, the Exalted. It is the point from which man sets out to the meeting with Allah (liqa' allah) and gazing

.upon His honoured face and beauty

The second request follows the first one, as it is the intermediate stage in one's .۲ ascending movement toward Allah. It is not possible for one to traverse this path to Allah, nor attain proximity and nearness to Him, "in the abode of truthfulness with an omnipotent King"(۱), without passing through this stage.

The means which carry man to this ultimate goal which is desired by every prophet, friend of Allah, truthful one and martyr, is the love of Allah, intimacy with Him, and yearning for Him. Without this, it is not possible for man to ascend such a lofty ascent toward Allah.

Love, yearning and intimacy are undoubtedly a provision from Allah, which He provides to those He chooses and picks up from His servants. However, this takes place after traversing the preliminary stages mentioned by the Imam ('a) in different verses of the above whispered prayer.

The Imam ('a) greatly insists on this request and he employs different means and expressions in order to attain his request. Thus, he calls out to Allah with such an impressive calling, "O Furthest Wish of the hearts of the yearners, O Utmost Limit of the hopes of the lovers..."

Thereafter, he asks from Allah love of Him, love for those who love Him, and love for every work which would take him to His proximity.

Let us ponder on the words of the Imam ('a) himself, for commentary of them would make us miss the opportunity of

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۱- Qur'an, ۵۴:۵۵.

directly looking at the horizons of this ‘love’ which the Imam (‘a) is trying to open for us in this supplication, “I ask from You love of You, love for those who love You, love for every work which will join me to Your nearness, and that You make Yourself more beloved to me than anything other than You; and make my love for You lead to Your good pleasure, and my yearning for You protect against disobeying You, endow me with gazing upon You, look at me with the eye of affection and tenderness, and turn not Your face away from me.”

He also says: “Make us among those... whom You have given yearning for the meeting with You...whom You have given refuge from separation from You and Your loathing... and whose heart You have captivated with Your will.”

He then says: “O Allah, make us among those whose habit is rejoicing in You and yearning for You, whose time is spent in sighing and moaning... whose hearts are fixed upon Your love, and their cores shaken with awe of You.”

In short, there are four requests put forth by the Imam (‘a) in the above verses:

۱. He, the Exalted, should give us refuge from being separated from Him and from His loathing.

۲. He should bestow upon us His love and affection.

۳. He should provide us with intimacy with Him.

۴. He should endow us with yearning for the meeting with Him.

The Imam (‘a) summarizes the concepts of hubb and shawq

in this beautiful statement, “O Allah, make us among those whose habit is rejoicing in You and craving for You”.

Rejoicing (irtiyah) in Allah is different from craving (hanin) for Him, and the Imam (‘a) asks Allah for both. Rejoicing is the state of intimacy (uns) which stems from the ‘meeting’ (liqa’), while craving (hanin) is the state of yearning (shawq) which springs from the movement toward the ‘meeting with Allah’.

۳. The third stage of this heavenly journey toward Allah, the Exalted, as described in this noble whispered prayer, is the ultimate goal and the noblest of what the prophets and the truthful have been asking from Allah. It is asking Allah for gaze upon His majestic face and His brilliant beauty. This is a goal which cannot be attained except by the chosen among the chosen ones whom Allah picks up for His nearness and neighbourhood.

The Imam (‘a) says with this regard, “Make us among those whom You have granted gazing upon Your face… and whom You have settled in a sure sitting place in Your neighbourhood… and whom You have picked for seeing You… and endow me with gazing upon You”.

What a great wish that man should look at the face of his Lord, see His majesty and beauty from the close, sit beside Him in the abode of truthfulness in His neighbourhood, and that His lord should give him to drink a pure drink.

Another Illustration

۲) Here is another unique portrait of yearning for Allah and intimacy

with Him in the whispered prayer of al-muridin (the devotees) from Imam Zayn al-'Abidin ('a):

"O Allah, so make us travel on the roads that arrive at You, and set us into motion on paths nearest to reaching You. Make near for us the far, and make easy for us the hard and difficult. Join us to Your servants, those who hurry to You swiftly, knock constantly at Your door, and worship You by night and by day, while they remain apprehensive in awe of You.

You have purified their drinking places, taken them to the objects of their desire, granted their requests, accomplished their wishes through Your bounty, filled their minds with Your love, and quenched their thirst with Your pure drink. Through You have they reached the pleasure of whispered prayer to You, and in You have they achieved their furthest goals.

O He who comes toward those who come toward Him and grants gifts and bestows bounty upon them through tenderness. He is compassionate and clement toward those heedless of His remembrance, and loving and tender in drawing them to His door. I ask You to place me among those of them who have the fullest share from You, the highest station with You, the most plentiful portion of Your love, and the most excellent allotment of Your knowledge, for my aspiration has been cut off from everything but You, and my desire has turned toward You alone.

You are my object, none other; to You alone belongs

my waking and my sleeplessness. Meeting You is the gladness of my eye, joining You the wish of my soul. Toward You is my yearning, in love for You my passionate longing, in inclining toward You my fervent craving. Your good pleasure is the aim I seek, vision of You my need, Your neighbourhood my request, nearness to You the .utmost object of my asking

In whispered prayer to You I find my repose and my ease. With You lies the remedy of my illness, the cure for my burning thirst, the coolness of my ardour, the removal of my distress. Be my intimate in my loneliness, the releaser of my stumble, the forgiver of my slip, the accepter of my repentance, the responder of my supplication, the patron of preserving me from sin, the one who frees me from my neediness. Cut me not off from You, and keep me not far from You. O bliss and my garden. O my this (world and my Hereafter…”(١

The is a sublime piece from the loftiest of the whispered prayers, a marvelous piece from the beautiful texts of du’a’, and the prime from among the prime words of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) in supplication, entreaty and love; which has emanated from a heart .filled with passionate love for Allah, and longing for the meeting with Him

These verses are worthy to be pondered upon a great deal. We shall, however, restrict ourselves to a quick look at some of the descriptions and

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.Bihar al-Anwar, vol.٩۴, pg.١۴٨ -١

.concepts about the Divine love with which this whispered prayer is embellished

In the beginning, Imam Zayn al-’Abidin (‘a) asks Allah to hold his hand and make him traverse the path which arrives at Him. This is in fact the summary of all that which is in this prayer of the loftiest requests.

In this supplication, the Imam (‘a) does not ask from Allah this world or the Hereafter, though it is a permissible request which is also liked by Allah; rather he asks Him for nearness, reaching Him, and His neighbourhood in the abode of truthfulness with the prophets, martyrs, and the truthful ones. He (‘a) says: “O Allah, so make us travel on the roads that arrive at You.”

The Imam (‘a) does not say “the road (sabil) which arrives at You” in a singular form; he rather says “the roads (subul) that arrive at You” using the plural form. The reason being that the path (sirat) toward Allah is one and not manifold, as the Qur’an has not mentioned except one path. Allah, the Exalted, says:

- “Guide us on the straigth path (sirat), the path of those whom You have blessed – such as have not incurred Your wrath, nor are astray.”(۱)
- “…and Allah guides whomever He wishes to a straight path (sirat).”(۲)
- “…and guides them to a straight path (sirat).”(۳)
- “…We chose them and guided them to a straight path (sirat).”(۴)

But with regard to the word ‘sabil’ (road), it has appeared in the plural form

p: ۲۵۴

۱- Qur’an, ۱:۶-۷.

۲- Qur’an, ۲:۲۱۳.

۳- Qur’an, ۵:۱۶.

۴- Qur’an, ۶:۸۷.

many times in the Qur'an, both in the case of truth (haqq) and falsehood (batil). He, the Exalted, says:

- "With it Allah guides those who follow {the course of} His pleasure to the ways (subul) of peace."(١)
- "and do not follow other ways (subul), for they will separate you from His way (sabil)."(٢)
- "and why should we not put our trust in Allah, seeing that He has guided us in our ways (subulana)."(٣)
- "As for those who strive in Us, we shall surely guide them in Our ways (subulana), and Allah is indeed with the virtuous."(۴)

Allah, the Exalted, has kept numerous ways which lead the people to Him, as it is common among the scholars that 'There are as many roads to Allah as the breaths of the creatures." Although all these ways and roads are in accordance with the straight path (as-Sirat al-mustaqim) of Allah. He, the Exalted, has appointed for everyone a specific way through which he would come to know Him, and which would lead him to Him.

Accordingly, some of the people move toward Allah through the road of knowledge ('ilm) and intellect ('aql), while others through the road of heart (qalb) and breast (fu'ad). Yet there are people who attain recognition of Allah through trading and dealing with Him. He, the Exalted, says:

"O you who have faith! Shall I show you a deal that will deliver you from a painful punishment?"(۵),

and:

"And among the people is he who sells his soul

۱- Qur'an, ۵:۱۶.

۲- Qur'an, ۶:۱۵۳.

۳- Qur'an, ۱۴:۱۲.

۴- Qur'an, ۲۹:۶۹.

۵- Qur'an, ۶۱:۱۰.

(seeking the pleasure of Allah, and Allah is most kind to {His} servants."(۱)

Here, Imam Zayn al-'Abidin ('a) asks Allah to make him travel the ways, and not a single way, that arrive at Him; as the more one travels through different roads to Allah, the stronger, more definite and assuring would be his arrival at His .neighbourhood and proximity

Thereafter, he asks from Allah to join him with those people who hasten to Him from among His righteous servants, those who quickly move toward Allah and spend their .day and night in His obedience and worship

However, the path to Allah is hard and difficult. The Qur'an refers to this path as 'one with thorns' (dhat ash-Shawkah).(۲) There have been many people who began journeying this path with resolution and determination, but then collapsed in the .middle of the way

Imam Zayn al-'Abidin ('a) asks Allah to make near for him the far, and make easy for him the hard during this difficult journey, and to join him to the righteous people (salihin) who have preceded him, though he himself is the leader of the righteous; for the company of the friends of Allah and the righteous ones on the road with thorns gives strength to the hearts of all, and increases in their determination to pursue the .path further

Indeed the journey to Allah is difficult. Therefore, if a group of the righteous move together on this path, holding firm onto each other, enjoining one another to patience and to follow

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۱- Qur'an, ۲:۲۰۷.

۲- {Trans. Qur'an, ۸:۷.}

.the truth, then moving on the path with thorns would become much easier for them

Regarding the nature of this difficult and long journey, and asking the nearing of the far, ease in the journey, and joining the righteous who were on this path, Imam 'Ali bin al-Husayn ('a) says: "...and set us into motion on the paths nearest to reaching You, make near for us the far, make easy for us the hard and difficult; Join us to Your servants who hurry to You swiftly, knock constantly at Your door, and worship You by ".night and by day

Inspirations and Outflows of the Heart

The Imam ('a) characterizes the righteous ones, those he asks Allah to join him to them, with such a lofty attribute which is worthy of contemplation. He ('a) says: "... those for whom You have purified their drinking places, and taken them to the objects of their desire... filled their minds with Your love, and quenched their thirst with Your ".pure drink

But what is this clean and pure drink which their Lord has given them to drink in this ?world? And which receptacle is this that Allah fills it with His love

Indeed this pure drink is the drink of love (hubb), certainty (yaqin), sincerity (ikhlas) .(and recognition (ma'rifah), while the receptacle is the heart (qalb

Allah, the Exalted, has provided man with numerous receptacles for recognition, certainty and sincerity, but the 'heart' is the greatest of all of them and the most .spacious of them

Thus, when Allah purifies for His

servant the drink of his heart, and makes him drink a clean and pure drink, then his actions, speech, and offerings would also be clean and pure. This is because there is similarity and homogeneity (musanakhah) between that which enters the heart and that which comes out from it. Thus, if that which enters the heart is pure and clean, coming from a pure and sweet spring, then that which flows out from it would be similar to that. Subsequently, the actions of a person, his speech, views, behaviour, .stance and offerings would all be pure and delightful

On the contrary, if what enters the heart is dirty or polluted by it, of what satans inspire their friends, then that which comes out of it would undoubtedly be similar to it in deceit (kidhb), hypocrisy (nifaq), miserliness (shuhh), and turning away (i'rad) from .Allah and His Prophet

The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said, "Indeed there are two nearness to the heart; nearness from the angel {which is} promising of good and a confirming of truth; and nearness from the enemy {which is} threatening with evil and a denying of truth. So whoever experiences that {within himself}, then he should know that it is from Allah; and whoever experiences the other {nearness}, then he should take ".refuge with Allah from the shaitan

Thereafter, he recited:"Satan frightens you of poverty and prompts you to {commit} (indecent acts; while Allah promises you His forgiveness and grace.(۱)"(۲

The nearness of the

۱- Qur'an, ۲:۲۶۷.

۲- Tafsir al-Mizan, vol.۲, pg.۴۰۴.

angel is the Lordly inspiration (al-warid ar-rabbani), while the nearness of the shaitan .(is the satanic inspiration (al-warid ash-Shaitani

Do you not see when a bee collects the nectar from flowers, it gives out a pleasant and sweet honey to the people, in which there is cure for them? But if it gathers its .food from unpure and unclean sources, then its produce would naturally be the same

Allah, the Exalted, says about His Friend, Ibrahim, and His messengers Ishaq and :Ya'qub

And remember Our servants Ibrahim, Ishaq and Ya'qub, men of strength and insight. " Indeed We purified them with the exclusiveness of the remembrance of the abode {of the Hereafter}. Indeed with Us they are surely among the elect of the best." [1]

This lofty attribute of strength and insight which Allah ascribes to these great prophets is the result of the pure drink which Allah had given to them, "Indeed We purified them with the exclusiveness of the remembrance of the abode {of the ".{Hereafter

Had Allah not purified them with this exclusiveness of the remembrance of the Hereafter, they would have neither had the strength nor insight. [2]

Therefore, in order for man's deeds to become pure, it is necessary that his drink be .pure, as the heart gives out what it takes in

The Principle of Choice

After we have explained the role of what enters the heart (qalb) and what comes out of it, and the similarity and homogeneity between them, we would like to equally insist that what has been said does

p: ۲۵۹

۱- Qur'an, ۳۸:۴۵-۴۷.

۲- There is a bilateral-relation between that which enters the heart and that which

flows out from it. If that which enters the heart is good, then what comes out from it would be good as well; as the opposite is true also. When the acts of a person are righteous, then Allah would grant him with the exclusiveness of the remembrance of the Hereafter. But if his deeds are evil, then Allah would deprive him of the pure drink and leave him on his own; thus he would be drinking of what shaitan and his own lowly desires inspire him with, and that which the people drink from the table of satan .and their mean desires

not necessarily nullify the ‘principle of choice’ (asl al-ikhtiyar) which is the basis of many Qur’anic concepts and ideas. It does not mean that the heart is an empty receptacle which receives and gives out what is put in it of good and evil. Rather, the heart is a conscious receptacle which comprehends what is delivered to it, and .distinguishes the truth from the falsehood, and the good from the bad

In fact, this is another fundamental principle in Islamic thought. Many issues and principles in Islam are dependent on the principle of choice as well as on this principle, .(that is, the ‘consciousness of the heart’ (wa’y al-qalb

There has been great emphasis in the Islamic sources on the active role of the heart in human life, of its ability of detection, and high efficiency in distinguishing the right .from the wrong

It is narrated that once Prophet Dawud (‘a) secretly called upon Allah and said, “O Allah, every king has a treasury, where is Your treasury?” He, the Majestic, replied, “I have a treasury even bigger than the Throne (‘arsh), wider than the Seat (kursiyy), better than the Heaven, and more beautiful than the dominion (malakut); its earth is {My} cognizance (ma’rifah), its heavens is faith (Iman), its sun is yearning (shawq), its moon is love (mahabbah), its stars are secret thoughts (khawatir), its cloud is intellect (‘aql), its rain is mercy (rahmah), its tree is obedience (ta’ah), its fruit is wisdom (hikmah). It has four pillars: reliance

tawakkul), contemplation (tafkir), intimacy (uns), and remembrance (dhikr). And it has) four doors: knowledge ('ilm), wisdom (hikmah), patience (sabr), and contentment ((rida)... indeed it is the heart."(1)

It is obvious that the above narration employs a symbolic language in terms of .question and answer; a language frequently employed in the Islamic traditions

It has been narrated that Allah, the Exalted, said to Prophet Musa ('a), "O Musa, free your heart for My love; because I have made Your heart a field of My love, and I have spread in Your heart a land of My cognizance (ma'rifah), and I have built in Your heart a sun of My yearning (shawq), and I have placed in Your heart a moon of My love (mahabbati), and I have put in Your heart a spring of contemplation (tafakkur), and I have set in motion a wind of My success (tawfiq) in your heart, and I have showered on your heart a shower of My grace (tafaddul), and I have planted in your heart a plant of My truthfulness (sidq), and I have grown trees of My obedience (ta'ati) in your (heart, and I have put mountains of My certainty (yaqin) in your heart."(2)

The language employed in this narration is also a symbolic one. Anyway, both narrations illustrate the active role of the heart in distinguishing truth from falsehood, .(and guidance (huda) from error (dalal

A Return to the Whispered Prayer of Al-muridin

Thereafter, Imam Zayn al-'Abidin ('a) calls on Allah with this touching call, "O He who comes toward those who come toward

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۱- Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۱۵, pg.۳۹.

۲- Ibid.

Him, and grants gifts and bestows bounty upon them through tenderness, and who is compassionate and clement toward those heedless of His remembrance, and loving and tender in drawing them to His door."

The above call entails two points. The first point is that Allah, the Exalted, comes toward those who come toward Him, and reverts to them by His grace. And the second point is that He is clement toward those who are heedless of Him, and repels heedlessness (ghaflah) from them through Lordly attractions (al-jadhabat ar-rabbaniyyah).

After this preamble, Imam Zayn al-'Abidin ('a) invokes Allah to make him among the righteous ones with the biggest share of His mercy, the highest status, and the greatest lot of His love, "I ask You to make me amidst them one with the fullest share from You, the highest station with You, the most plentiful portion of Your love, and the most excellent allotment of Your knowledge."

This phrase of the supplication gives rise to this question that just a while ago the Imam ('a) was wishing that may Allah join him with the righteous ones, and now he longs from Allah that He may make him to be the one with the fullest share and highest station with Him. So how can we place this request beside the previous one? What had transpired in the atmosphere of the prayer as well as in the soul of the Imam ('a) during the supplication that led to this leap in his request; that is,

from the request of joining the righteous to the desire to attain precedence over them ?and to lead them

The answer to this question requires an explanation of a secret from among the secrets of prayer. The secret is that Allah, the Exalted, has taught us not to slacken off in asking and not to desist from praying so long as the Master is the Generous. And how vile it is to desist from praying when the one asked from (mas'ul) is the Generous, and there is no limit or end to the treasures of His mercy, rather the frequency of .giving increases Him not but in generosity and kindness

From among the things that Allah, the Exalted, has taught us of the manners (adab) and characters (akhlaq) of the servants of the All-merciful ('ibad ar-rahman) is that we should ask from Him to make us the leaders of the pious ones (muttaqin), "... and (make us leaders of the Godwary."(١

Besides, we frequently come across the following high-aspiring phrase in the supplications that have reached us from our infallibles (ma'sumin), "And give ".preference to me, and do not give preference to anyone else over me

The Peak and Trough of the Prayer

Many supplications have a point of climax and nadir. The lowest point in a supplication embodies the state of the servant of Allah and what he has committted of the sins and evils; whilst the climax of it is manifested in the high aspiration and hope of the servant in Allah, the Glorious; as there is

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.Qur'an, ٢۵:٧۴ -١

.no limit to His kindness, generosity and the treasuries of His mercy

In the supplication of abu hamzah ath-thumali, Imam Zayn al-'Abidin ('a) refers to this spiritual diversity in the state of the soul when he says: "When I look at my sins, O my Master, I am terrified; but when I look at Your generosity, I become hopeful."

In another place of the same supplication, he says: "My hope, O my Master, is ever great, but my deeds are evil, so grant me of Your pardon to the extent of my hope, and do not punish me because of my worst deeds."

In the supplication of kumayl, Imam 'Ali bin Abi Talib ('a) begins from the trough and says: "O Allah, forgive me the sins which tear apart protection; O Allah, forgive me the sins which bring down adversities; O Allah, forgive me the sins which alter blessings; O Allah, forgive me sins which hold back prayer... O Allah, I find no forgiver of my sins, nor concealer of my wicked acts, no transformer of any of my bad deeds into good acts but You...

Glory be to You, and praise is due to You; I have wronged myself, I have been audacious in my ignorance, and I have depended upon Your constant remembrance of me and Your favour toward me...

O Allah, my tribulation is tremendous, and my bad state is excessive, my acts are inadequate, my fetters have tied me down, my high hopes have held me back from

my again, and this world with its delusions, my own soul with its offences, and my dilly-dallying have {all} deceived me. O my Master, so I ask You by Your might not to let my evil deeds and acts veil my supplication from You; and not to disgrace me ”...through the hidden things You have come to know from my innermost secret

This trough denotes the lowest level of servanthood (‘ubudiyyah) and what surrounds it of the evil deeds. Thereafter, towards the end of the supplication we see the climax of aspiration which manifests itself in the great hope of the servant in the all-embracing mercy of Allah. Hence, he (‘a) says: “...and bestow upon me earnestness in {my} fear of You, and continuity in {my} being joined to Your service, so that I may move easily toward You in the battlefields of the foremost, hurry to You among the prominent, desire fervently Your proximity among the fervently desirous, move near to You with the nearness of the sincere ... and make me the most excellent of Your slaves in share with You, the nearest of them in station to You, and the most elect of ”...them in proximity to You; for that cannot be attained except by Your grace

And we also find this vast difference between the peak and trough in the supplication of Abu Hamzah ath-Thumali; as in the beginning of it Imam Zayn al-’Abidin (‘a) sets :off from the lowest point and says

,and who am I ...“

p: ۲۶۵

O my Lord; and what is my significance? Bestow upon me Your grace, and give me charity of Your pardon. O my Lord, cover me with Your veil, and refrain from ...reproaching me by the honour of Your face

Do not burn me with the Fire, because You are where I place my hope, and reside me not in the abyss, for You are indeed the comfort of my eye... have mercy upon my strangeness in this world, upon my grief at the time of death, upon my loneliness in the grave, upon my fear inside the burial place, upon my humiliation when I shall be resurrected before You for the reckoning (hisab). And have mercy upon me when I will be lying motionless on {my death} bed and the hands of my beloved ones shall be ;moving me

and be kind to me when I will be stretched on the funeral bath-place and the righteous among my neighbours shall be washing me; and be affectionate toward me when I shall be carried and my relatives would be holding the extremities of my coffin, and be generous to me when I will be transported {to the grave} while I have ".descended on You, alone in my hole

Thereafter, in the climax of the supplication and the stage of aspiration, he ('a) says: "O Allah, I ask You the best of what Your righteous servants have asked from You, O Best of those who have been asked, and Most Generous of

...those who have given... fulfill my quest in myself, my family, parents, and children

enrich my living, and make manifest my manliness, and put in order all my affairs, and make me among those whom You have prolonged their lives, and made their acts good, and completed upon them Your blessings, and whom You are pleased with, and have caused them to live a good life... and single me out for Your special remembrance... and make me the one with the fullest share with You amongst Your servants in every good that You have sent down or are going to send down."

This journey from the trough to the peak is another expression of the journey of man toward Allah, the Exalted; a journey of hope and aspiration. And when one's aspiration and hope is in Allah only, then there is no end to such a journey.

The Three Means

Imam 'Ali bin al-Husayn ('a) seeks recourse to Allah with three means in this journey, as Allah, the Exalted, has commanded us to do so, "O you who have faith! Be wary of Allah, and seek the means of recourse to Him"(۱), and, "They {themselves} are the ones who supplicate, seeking a recourse to their Lord."(۲)

The means which the Imam ('a) seeks recourse with to Allah are the neediness (hajat), petition (su'al) and love (hubb). How excellent is the Imam as a teacher of supplication, for he well knows what to ask from Allah, how to ask, and where the places of Allah's

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۱- Qur'an, ۵:۳۵.

۲- Qur'an, ۱۷:۵۷.

.mercy are

The First Means: Neediness

Neediness by itself is among the places of Allah's mercy. Allah sends down His mercy upon His creatures, even upon animals and plants without them having asked for it, due to their need. However, this does not imply the negation of petition and request, .as both of them are two other doors of the mercy of Allah beside neediness

Hence, when people become thirsty, it is their Lord who gives them drink; when they become hungry, it is He who feeds them; when they are uncovered, it is He who :covers them

;(and when I get sick, it is He who cures me"(١"

even if they have no knowledge of Allah, and no knowledge of how to call upon Him or what to ask from Him, "O He who gives to one who asks Him, O He who gives to one (who does not ask him and does not know Him, out of His affection and mercy."(٢

In the famous whispered prayer (munajat) of Imam 'Ali ('a), we find a beatiful :reference to this Lordly point with regard to attracting Allah's mercy. He says

My Master, my master, You are the Master and I the servant! Has anyone mercy" upon the servant but the Master? My Master, my Master, You are the Owner and I the owned! Has anyone mercy upon the owned but the Owner? My Master, my Master, You are the Exalted and I the abased! Has anyone mercy upon the abased but the Exalted. My Master, my Master, You are

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١- Qur'an, ٢۶:٨٠.

٢- Among the supplications of the holy month of Rajab.

.the Creator and I the creature! Has anyone mercy upon the creature but the Creator

My Master, my Master, You are the All-supreme and I the lowly! Has anyone mercy upon the lowly but the All-supreme. My Master, my Master, You are the Strong and I the weak! Has anyone mercy upon the weak but the Strong. My Master, my Master, You are the Needless and I the needy! Has anyone mercy upon the needy but the .Needless

My Master, my Master, You are the Giver and I the asker! Has anyone mercy upon the asker but the Giver. My Master, my Master, You are the Living and I the dead! Has anyone mercy upon the dead but the Living. My Master, my Master, You are the Subsistent and I the perishing! Has anyone mercy upon the perishing but the .Subsistent

My Master, my Master, You are the Everlasting and I the vanishing! Has anyone mercy upon the vanishing but the Everlasting. My Master, my Master, You are the Provider and I the provided for! Has anyone mercy upon the provided for but the Provider? My Master, my Master, You are the Generous and I the stingy! Has anyone ?mercy upon the stingy but the Generous

My Master, my Master, You are the Reliever and I the afflicted! Has anyone mercy upon the afflicted but the Reliever? My Master, my Master, You are the Great and I the small! Has anyone mercy upon the small but the Great? My

Master, my Master, You are the Guide and I the lost one! Has anyone mercy upon the ?lost one but the Guide

My Master, my Master, You are the Forgiver and I the sinner! Has anyone mercy upon the sinner but the Forgiver? My Master, my Master, You are the Victor and I the defeated! Has anyone mercy upon the defeated but the Victor? My Master, my Master, You are the Cherisher and I the cherished! Has anyone mercy upon the ?cherished but the Cherisher

My Master, my Master, You are the All-magnanimous and I the submissive! Has anyone mercy upon the submissive but the All-magnanimous? My Master, my Master, have mercy on me through Your mercy, and be pleased with me through Your generosity, kindness, and grace, O Possessor of generosity and favour, and might and ".gratitude

In these beautiful phrases of the supplication, Imam 'Ali ('a) seeks means of recourse to Allah through his neediness (hajat) and indigence (faqr), and places the neediness .of the servant and his indigence in the position of attracting Allah's mercy

This is because the creature brings down the mercy of the Creator, the lowly draws on the mercy of the All-supreme, the weak attracts the mercy of the Strong, the needy draws on the mercy of the Needless, the one provided for attracts the mercy of the Provider, the afflicted brings down the mercy of the Reliever, the lost one causes the mercy of the Guide to descend, the sinner attracts the

mercy of the Forgiver, the confused attracts the mercy of the Proof, and the defeated .draws on the mercy of the Victor

All these are part of the universal norms of Allah, and the norms of Allah shall never .change

Accordingly, wherever the elements of neediness and indigence are found, the mercy of Allah would be there. The mercy of Allah comes down on the places of need as water flows to, and settles in, lower lands; for Allah, the Exalted, is kind and generous, and the Kind always takes care of the places of need and singles them out for his .mercy

Imam Zayn al-'Abidin ('a) says in the supplication of abu hamzah ath-thumali, "...give me due to my being poor, and have mercy upon me because of my weakness." Thus, the Imam ('a) takes up his neediness and weakness as means to attain the mercy of .Allah

It is, however, natural that this speech cannot be understood unrestrictively and as a sole factor for attaining Allah's mercy, because there are other elements as well which are decisive in attracting Allah's mercy. Likewise, there are obstacles which impede Allah's mercy. Moreover, there is also the principle of trial (ibtila') which is one .of the norms of Allah in human life

Hence, when we say that 'neediness and poverty attract the mercy of Allah', we ought to comprehend this speech within the framework of this comprehensive Divine system. Understanding this system entails by itself a wide horizon of knowledge which

we do not intend to dwell on at the moment. I hope that Allah will grant me success .(tawfiq) in the future to explain this reality in a manner worthy of it

We find in the Qur'an instances of the presentation of neediness and poverty before Allah, the Exalted, in order to attract His mercy and attain the response (ijabah) from Him. Neediness has its own kind of response as supplication and petition have a .response peculiar to them; for exhibiting ones neediness is in itself a kind of prayer

The Holy Qur'an mentions these instances, ascribing them to the righteous servants :of Allah. They are

The neediness of Prophet Ayyub, the righteous servant of Allah, when he called .۱ :upon Allah amidst affliction and trial

And Ayyub, when he called out to his Lord, 'Indeed distress has befallen me, and You" are the Most Merciful of the merciful.' So We answered his prayer and removed his distress, and We gave him {back} his family along with others like them as a mercy (from Us, and an admonition for the devout."(۱

Although this phrase which is mentioned by the Qur'an, quoting it from this afflicted righteous servant, does not contain any prayer, Allah, the Exalted, says: "... So We answered his prayer and removed his distress"; as if presenting one's neediness and .poverty is also a kind of supplication

The righteous servant, Dhu an-Nun ('a), presents his indigence, neediness and the .۲ ,wrong he committed against himself before Allah, the Exalted

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.Qur'an, ۲۱:۸۳ ۸۴ -۱

,from the darkness of the belly of the fish, deep inside the sea

And the Man of the Fish, when he left in a rage, thinking that We would not put him to" hardship. Then he cried out in the darkness: 'There is no god except You! You are immaculate! I have indeed been among the wrongdoers.' So We answered his prayer (and delivered him from the agony; and thus do We deliver the faithful."(۱

As exhibiting neediness is a kind of prayer, similarly the response (istijabah) would not be to the petition, rather to the neediness and indigence itself. In the above case, Prophet Yunus ('a) did not utter more than these words, "There is no god except You! You are immaculate! I have indeed been among the wrongdoers", but Allah answered him and delivered him from the agony (ghamm), "So We answered his prayer and ".delivered him from the agony

We find in the Qur'an the words of Prophet Musa ('a) and his brother Harun ('a) .۳ :when Allah commanded them to take His message to Fir'awn. The Qur'an says

Let the two of you go to Fir'awn. Indeed he has rebelled. Speak to him in a soft" manner; may be he will take admonition or fear. The two of them said, 'Our Lord! We (are indeed afraid that he will forestall us or will overstep the bounds."(۲

They neither asked Allah to protect them from Fir'awn and his army, nor provide them with the security they needed, rather

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.Qur'an, ۲۱:۸۷ ۸۸ -۱

.Qur'an, ۴۳ ۴۵ -۲

what they mentioned to Allah was their weakness and fear of oppression, power and transgression of Fir'awn, "We are indeed afraid that he will forestall us or will overstep the bounds", and Allah answered their need for support and backing:

"He said, 'Do not be afraid, for I will be with the two of you, hearing and seeing {whatever happens}.'"(١)

۴. The fourth example is in the words of Prophet Nuh ('a), the righteous servant of Allah, when he presented before Allah his need for his son to be saved from the flood,

"Nuh called out to his Lord and said, 'My Lord! My son is indeed from my family. Your promise is indeed true, and You are the fairest of all judges.'"(٢)

This is a polite petition from this righteous servant of Allah, for he did not even ask Allah to save his son, rather he only exhibited before Him his need that his son should be saved from drowning.

In conclusion, neediness and indigence are among the places where the mercy of Allah descends.

Even the animals and plants attract Allah's mercy but through their neediness and indigence. Thus, when they get thirsty, it is Allah who gives them to drink, and when they become hungry, it is He who satisfies and feeds them.

There is a lot to be said on this topic and I have explained part of it in my other book called 'Open-heartedness' (sharh as-Sadr), in the series of lessons from the Qur'an titled 'Lessons from

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١- Qur'an, ٢١:۴۶.

٢- Qur'an, ١١:۴۵.

.(the Qur'an' (rihab al-qur'an

The Second Means: Supplication

:Supplication is among the keys of Allah's mercy. He, the Exalted, says

Call Me, I will answer you", and, "Say, 'What store my Lord would set by You were it" (not for Your supplication?"(١

The Third Means: Love

.Through love, one can attract of the mercy of Allah what he cannot by other means

Now in the following phrases, just ponder over these three means by which Imam :Zayn al-'Abidin ('a) is seeking recourse to Allah

Your good pleasure is my wish; vision of You my need... With You lies the remedy of " my illness, the cure for my burning thirst, the coolness of my ardour, the removal of .my distress." This is the means of neediness and indigence

Your neighbouring is my request, nearness to You the utmost object of my asking... " Be my intimate in my loneliness, the releaser of my stumble, the forgiver of my slip, the accepter of my repentance, the responder to my supplication, the patron of preserving me from sin, the one who frees me from my neediness." This is the means .of supplication

You are my object, none other; to You alone belongs my waking and my" sleeplessness. Meeting You is the gladness of my eye, joining You the wish of my soul. Toward You is my yearning, in love for You my passionate longing, in inclining toward .You my fervent craving." This is the means of love

Now let us contemplate on this phrase of the speech of the Imam ('a) which is among the beautiful

.Qur'an, ٢٥:٧٧ -١

pieces of this supplication; as a prayer has a beauty just like that of the art and literature. He ('a) says: "… for my aspiration has been cut off (inqita') from everything but You, and my desire has turned toward You alone; You are my object, none other; to You alone belongs my waking and my sleeplessness, meeting You is the delight of my eye."

Cut-off (inqita') involves in meaning what attachment (ta'lluq) does not. This is why the Imam ('a) does not say, 'For my aspiration has been attached to none but You', rather he says: 'For my aspiration has been cut off from everything but You'; for attachment to Allah does not negate attachment to other than Him, even if one may be sincere in his attachment to Allah, whereas the concept of 'cut-off' entails both a positive and a negative meaning, as the meaning of inqita' is 'detachment from the creatures and turning toward Allah'. Detachment from the creatures is the negative significance intended by the Imam ('a) from this phrase, whilst the positive significance intended by him from it is 'the turning toward Allah'.

This is because sincerity (ikhlas) in love manifests itself in disjoining (fasl) and joining (wasl); disjoining from all other than Allah, and joining with Allah and those whom He loves and has commanded to love. These are, in fact, two sides of one issue.

Hence, when 'love' becomes pure and free from insincerity, it would involve two things; association (wala') and disassociation (bara'ah),

.attachment and detachment, and disconnection from 'the creatures' to Allah

The same meaning is also contained in the second phrase which says: "...Toward You is my yearning"; for turning toward Allah entails the turning away (i'rad) and the turning toward (iqbal). Turning away from all other than Allah, and turning toward .Allah, and toward that which He loves and has commanded us to carry out

Thereafter comes the third emphasis on this reality and the most eloquent of it. It contains of the meaning of 'love' and 'detachment from all other than Him' what cannot be described and expressed by words, "You, and none other, are my object; to ".You alone belongs my waking and my sleeplessness

Wakefulness (sahar) and sleeplessness (suhad) are the opposite of sleep (nawm), with the difference that sahar is keeping the night awake in the state of intimacy (uns), while suhad is a kind of sleeplessness which occurs to a person when he is occupied with something of concern to him, such that it leaves him sleepless. In our case, this occupation with something of concern is yearning (hanin) and longing .(shawq) for Allah

Therefore, sahar and suhad represent two states among the states of love; intimacy and yearning. Intimacy with the remembrance of Allah and His presence such that the servant feels the presence of Allah in his supplication, remembrance, secret .supplications and prayers (salat); and yearning for the meeting (liqa') with Allah

In fact, a lover experiences both the above states when he stands

before Allah, as both of them have a role in leaving him sleepless when people are .asleep and lose their consiousness and senses because of it

Nevertheless, sleeping is a human need, and each of the righteous and the wicked have their share of it, even the prophets and the truthful ones do sleep. But, there is a difference between one who takes from sleep to the extent of his need, the way he fulfills his need from eating and drinking, and between one who surrenders himself to sleep and is dominated by it. As for the friends (awliya') of Allah, they do not surrender .themselves to sleep; rather sleep is a need for them and they take their share from it

The Holy Prophet (S) did not use to sleep but a little in order to be able to stand before Allah. He (S) also used to order for the water of ablution (wadu') to be kept at his head so that he may stand before Allah every time after he had taken his share from this natural need. A soft and comfortable mattress would be spread for him but he would order it to be taken away lest it should gradually lead him to submit to sleep. Instead, .he would sleep on a rough mat such that it would leave an impression on his side

Allah, the Exalted, has indeed placed in the calmness of the night treasures of His whispered prayers, remembrance and proximity which cannot

be found in the daytime. The night has its own men, as the day has its own; they stand in prayers when people are asleep; they get zealous and lively when people are dull; and they ascend toward Allah when people submit themselves to sleep and fall into .their beds

The night has its dominion (dawlah) as has the day. There are treasures at night as there are treasures at daytime. Normally people know well of the dominion of the daytime, its men and treasures. Few among the people are aware of the value of the dominion of the night, its treasures and its men. If a person combines the dominion of the night with that of the day, then such a man is sound, rightly guided and well .balanced

The Holy Prophet (S) was the man of both, the night and the daytime, utilizing from both of them in equal proportion. He would take love, sincerity and remembrance from the night, as he would acquire power, strength and wealth from the daytime in .order to pave the way for propagation of the message of Islam and strengthening it

Nonetheless, the vigil at night used to help him and make it possible for him to carry :the heavy load of Prophethood. He, the Exalted, says in this regard

O you wrapped up in your mantle! Stand vigil through the night, except a little, a half,“ or reduce a little from that, or add to it, and recite the Qur’an

in a measured tone. Indeed soon We shall cast on you a weighty word. Indeed the watch of the night is firmer in tread and more upright in respect to speech, for indeed (during the day you have drawn-out engagements."(١)

It would delight me to relate a Divine Narration here regarding the night and its men. It has been narrated that Allah, the Exalted, once revealed to one of the truthful ones :and said

I have servants from among my creatures who love Me, so I love them; they yearn" for Me and I yearn for them; they remember Me and I remember them; they gaze at Me and I gaze at them. If you follow in their way, I shall love you; and if you turn away .from them, I shall hate you

'?He said, 'O Lord, what are their characteristics

He {the Exalted} answered, 'They watch the shadow during daytime just like a kind shepherd watches his sheep(٢); they crave for sunset just as a bird craves for her nest at sunset. When the night covers them and the darkeness gets intense and the mats are spread and the beds are prepared and every lover retires with his beloved, they rise to their feet for Me, they spread their faces toward Me, they secretly call on .Me with My speech, and they cling onto Me with My melody

You will find some of them crying and lamenting, and moaning and complaining; while ,some others {in the position of} standing and sitting

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١- Qur'an, ٧٣:١ ٧.

٢- This is an allusion to the fact that they eagerly await the end of the day so that they may stand before their Lord in worship. {Trns.}

bowing down and prostrating. I see what they endure because of Me, and I hear their complain out of love for Me.

The foremost of what I give them are three things: I cast of my light into their hearts such that they talk of Me and I talk of them; if the heavens and the earth were to be in their scales (mawazin), I would undervalue that for them; and I turn toward them with My face. Can you tell Me of anyone who is aware of what I intend to give him toward whom I have turned with My face?"(١)

Imam al-Baqir ('a) is narrated to have said, "Among the things that Allah had revealed to Musa ('a) was, 'He is a liar who thinks that he loves Me but when the night falls he forgets Me. O son of 'Imran! Had you only seen those who stand for Me in the darkness while I have become incarnate before their eyes, addressing Me while I am far above to be seen, and talking to Me while I cannot be {physically} present. O son of 'Imran! Give Me tears from your eyes, and humility from Your heart; thereafter call on Me in the darkness of the nights and you will find Me Nearmost, Answering."(٢)

In the sermon of al-Muttaqin (the Godwary), Imam Amir al-Mu'minin 'Ali bin Abi Talib ('a) -describing for Hammam the state of the friends of Allah in their secret prayers at night, their remembrance and standing before Allah,

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١- Liqa' Allah, pg.١٠۴.

٢- Ibid, pg.١٠١.

says: “At night they rise on their feet {for prayers}, reading parts of the Qur’an in a measured tone, creating through it grief for themselves and taking counsel with it for the cure of their ailments. If they come across a verse which arouses desire {for the Heaven}, they pursue it avidly, and their spirits turn toward it eagerly, and they feel as .if it is in front of them

And when they come across a verse which fills with fear {of the Fire}, they bend the ears of their hearts toward it, and feel as though the sound of Hell and its cries are reaching their ears. They bend themselves from their backs, prostrate on their foreheads, palms, knees and toes, beseeching Allah, the Exalted, to set {them} free {from the Fire}. In the daytime, they are enduring, learned, virtuous and Godwary. (Fear {of Allah} has made them thin like arrows…”(١)

Another Illustration of the State of Yearning to Allah

Here is another illustration of yearning toward Allah in the whispered prayer of (٣ :al-’arifin (the knowers) by Imam Zayn al-’Abidin (‘a). He says

“

O Allah, make us among those within the gardens of whose breasts the trees of yearning for You have taken firm root, and the assemblies of whose hearts have been seized by the ardour of Your love. They seek shelter in the nests of meditation, feed upon the gardens of nearness and disclosure, drink from the pools of love with the .cup of gentle favour, and enter into the watering-places of warm affection

The covering has

.Nahj al-Balaghah, sermon no.١٩٣ -١

been lifted from their eyes, the darkness of disquiet has been dispelled from their beliefs and their innermost minds, the contention of doubt has been negated from their hearts and their secret thoughts, their breasts have expanded through the verification of true knowledge, their aspiration have ascended through precedent good fortune in renunciation, their drinking is sweet from the spring of devotion to good works, their secret thoughts are delicious in the sitting-place of intimacy, their minds are secure in the place of terror,

their souls are serene through the return to the Lord of lords, their spirits have reached certitude through triumph and prosperity, their eyes have been gladdened through gazing upon their Beloved, their settling place has been settled through reaching the request and attaining the expectation, and their commerce has profited through the sale of this world for the next.

O Allah, how agreeable for hearts are the thoughts inspiring Your remembrance, how sweet traveling to You through imagination upon the roads of the unseen worlds, how pleasant the taste of Your love, how delightful the drink of Your nearness! So give us refuge from Your casting out and Your sending far, and make us among the most elect of Your knowers, the most righteous of Your servants, the most truthful of Your obeyers, and the most sincere of Your worshippers."

I do not intend to stop here and ponder upon this prayer which is among the magnificent pieces of prayers from the Ahl al-Bayt ('a).

But I would

like to briefly explain the phrase with which Imam ‘Ali bin al-Husayn (‘a) begins his prayer. He says: “O Allah, make us among those within the gardens of whose breasts the trees of yearning for You have taken firm root, and the assemblies of whose ”.hearts have been seized by the ardour of Your love

The breasts (sudur) of the friends of Allah –as it appears from the speech of the .Imam- are gardens of delight containing delicious fruits

Generally, the breasts of the people are of different kinds. Some breasts are libraries and schools of learning. No doubt knowledge is good and light (nur) provided the .breast remains a garden of yearning toward Allah

Some other breasts are like shops, banks, and stock markets, crowded with numbers, tables and charts, and the accounts of profit and loss. Wealth and trade are good, but with the condition that they should not become activities which occupy the heart and the breast of a person, such that they become his only concern which do not part with .him

Yet there are breasts which are similar to salty lands in that they produce but thorns, colocynth, poison, hatred, tussle for acquiring wealth and power, and deceit and plots .against others

There are breasts which are places of entertainment and playgrounds, the way this .world (ad-dunya) is a play and diversion for a large number of people

And there are people whose breasts are divided into two parts; a part for poison, hatred, deception

and trickery, and a part for amusement and sport. Consequently, when the first part agitates them and makes them restless, they would take resort to the second part .and seek help from it in order to rescue themselves from the torment of the first part

But as for the breasts of the friends (awliya') of Allah, they are –as put by Imam Zayn al-'Abidin ('a)– gardens of yearning (shawq), filled with joy, delightful fruits, and .wherein the trees of yearning have taken firm root

Therefore, the yearning toward Allah is not something extrinsic to their breasts such that it would disappear under the compulsion of their lowly desires, or in case this world were to glamorize itself for them; nor would it diminish or its leaves wilt if this world were to cause constrain over them, or they were encircled by its hardships; for as long as the trees of shawq are firmly rooted in these breasts, they would remain .leafy, verdant, and fruitful despite all obstacles and difficulties

The state of yearning is in fact the state of the lightness (khiffah) of the soul; a state contrary to that of heaviness (tathaqul) and being inclined toward this world which is :refered to in the following holy verse

What is the matter with you that when you are told: 'Go forth in the way of Allah',..." you sink heavily to the ground? Are you pleased with the life of this world instead of (the Hereafter?"(۱

Indeed the soul becomes burdensome and

.Qur'an, ۹:۳۸ -۱

bloated whenever one becomes attached to this world and gets pleased with it and is inclined toward it. In contrast, if one is freed from this world and plucks out his self from it(۱), he would become spiritually light and, subsequently, easily attracted to the love of Allah and yearning toward Him.

This much of the discussion on the illustrations of love, shawq, and intimacy from the texts of the supplications of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) seems to be enough. We will now take up another discussion regarding the 'love of Allah.'

Sincerity in Love of Allah

The position of this issue is higher than that of 'unity in love' (tawhid al-hubb). This is because unity in love does not negate any other love apart from the love of Allah; rather it makes the love of Allah dominant over other kinds of love. Subsequently, the love of Allah would be the dominant and reigning love:

"...but the faithful have a more ardent love for Allah..."(۲)

This is one of the requisites of faith (Iman) and a branch among the branches of tawhid.

In contrast, sincerity (ikhlas) in love of Allah negates all other kinds of love apart from that of Allah, unless they are in extension (imtidad) to the love of Allah and take the form of 'love for Allah' (al-hubb lillah) and 'hatred for Allah' (al-bughd lillah).

However, sincerity in the love for Allah is not among the requirements of faith and tawhid, rather it has to do with the truthful ones (siddiqin) and their

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۱- Freeing oneself from this world does not mean abandoning it. The Holy Prophet (S) himself was a person free of {attachment to} this world, but still he used to work for spreading the message of Islam in this world, and to subject this world to it.

۲- Qur'an, ۲:۱۶۵.

spiritual stations (maqamat). For Allah, the Exalted, enables His friends and His righteous servants to free their hearts from all kinds of love other than the love of .Him

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) says: "The heart (qalb) is the sanctuary (haram) of Allah. Thus, do (not settle in the sanctuary of Allah someone other than Allah."(١)

This is a characteristic peculiar to the heart. The bodily parts move in life in different directions and embark on a variety of affairs which Allah has allowed and permitted. But with regard to the heart, it has been considered as the haram of Allah in which .love of other than Allah and attachment to other than Him ought not to dwell

The reference to the 'heart' in the above narration as 'a sanctuary' is precise and of significance; for a sanctuary is a guarded area and closed upon every stranger. Its inhabitants are not harmed nor do they experience any fear, and no stranger can enter it. Thus the heart is, the secured sanctuary of Allah; no love other than the love .of Allah can enter into it, and no harm or evil can touch it while it is in the heart

It is due to this very reason that the truthful ones and the sages from the servants of Allah wholly dedicate their love to Allah, such that they never associate His love with .any other love, whatever it may be, unless if it is in extension to the love of Allah

In

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol.٧٠, pg.٢٥ -١

the following prayer, we can sense the ardour of love and the trueness of sincerity in the love of Allah in the words of Imam Zayn al-'Abidin ('a), "O my Master, toward You is my desire, to You is my fear, and toward You is my aspiration. My hope has driven me to You; and onto You, O the One, I have placed my determination, and on what .You possess I have unfolded my wish

For You are my earnest hope and fear, with You my love has become accustomed, and to You I have surrendered myself, and to the rope of Your obedience I have fastened my fear. O my Lord, my heart is living with Your remembrance, and in (confiding to You do I cool within myself the agony of fear..."(١

In this part of the supplication, the Imam ('a) ties his desire, fear and hope altogether to Allah, placing all his resolution on Him, and dedicating to Him his earnest hope and .fear

(The Holy Prophet (S) is narrated to have said, "Love Allah whole-heartedly."(٢

In one of his supplications, Imam 'Ali bin al-Husayn ('a) says: "O Allah, I ask You to fill my heart with love of You, awe of You, belief in You, faith in You, fear of You, and (yearning toward You."(٣

When the love of Allah and yearning toward Him fills the heart of a servant, there would remain no vacant place in his heart for another love apart from that of Allah, unless

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.Part of the supplication of abu hamzah at-Thumali -١

.Kanz al-'Ummal, vol.۴٧, pg.۴۴ -٢

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol.٩٨, pg.٨٩ -٣

if the other love is in extension to His love, and, in this case, it would be counted as the love of Allah and yearning toward Him.

In his prayer at the beginning of the holy month of Ramadan, Imam as-Sadiq ('a) says: "Send blessings on Muhammad and his Progeny, occupy my heart with the great of Your affair, and send love of You to it until I meet You {on the Day of Judgement} with blood gushing forth from my jugular vein."(۱)

This statement implies sincerity in love for Allah, as His love becomes the only thing occupying the heart, and its only concern which does not part it.

The Jealousy of Allah for His Servant

Allah, the Exalted, loves His servant, and one of the properties of love is jealousy (ghayrah). Thus, He is earnestly concerned about the heart of His servant, as He loves His servant to be sincere in his love for Him and not to love anyone other than Him and not to let any other love enter his heart.

It has been narrated that Prophet Musa ('a) once called on Allah at the Sacred Valley (al-wadi al-muqaddas), saying, "O Lord, I have dedicated my love to You, and I have cleansed my heart of all other than You." {This was at a time when} he used to extremely love his family. So Allah, the Exalted, the Blessed, said to him, "... If your love is purely for Me, then take off from your heart the love of your family."(۲)

Among the instances

۱- Ibid, vol.۹۷, pg.۳۳۴.

۲- Ibid, vol.۸۳, pg.۲۳۶.

of the jealousy (ghayrah) of Allah for His servant is that He removes love of others from his heart, such that if He were to find that his heart is attached to other than Him, He would take that love away from him so that his heart may purely be for His love.

In the supplication of 'arafah, Imam al-Husayn ('a) says: "You are the one who has removed {love of} others from the hearts of Your lovers, such that they loved none but You... What has he found one who has lost You? And what has he lost one who has found You? Indeed he who is pleased with other than You as a substitute has gone wrong."(١)

I would like to relate in this regard an enlightening story which Shaykh Hasan al-Banna has narrated in his book Mudhakarat ad-Da'wah wa ud-Da'iyah. He says that Allah, the Exalted, had blessed Shaykh Shalabi, one of the Egyptian scholars in mysticism and ethics, with a daughter in the later stages of his life. The Shaykh was extremely fond of her and loved her passionately, such that he would not separate from her even after she had grown up. His love for her was on increase as she grew up and became young.

On the eve of the birth anniversary of Holy Prophet (S) , Shaykh al-Banna, together with a group of his friends, visited Shaykh ash-Shalabi as they were coming back from a gathering -near the house of the Shaykh- held due

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١- Ibid, vol.٩٨, pg.٢٢۶.

to this auspicious occasion, and sat with him for a while. As they intended to leave, the Shaykh told them with a gentle smile on his face, "By the will of Allah, visit me ".tomorrow so that we may bury {my daughter,} Ruhiyyah

This daughter was the only child he was blessed with after eleven years of his marriage. He would not separate from her even while at work. Now she was grown up and was in the prime of youth. He named her 'Ruhiyyah' as her position to him was .that of a spirit to the body

Shaykh al-Banna says that we were astonished and thus asked him, "When did she pass away?" He replied, "Today, just before sunset." We said, "Why did you not inform us, so that we could have taken out the funeral procession from another house?" He said, "But what has happened? {This auspicious occasion} has lessened our grief, and the funeral ceremony has changed to a happy occasion. Do you still want a greater "?blessing from Allah than this

Hence, the discussion changed into a lesson in mysticism given by the Shaykh. He saw the reason behind the death of his daughter as the jealosy (ghayrah) of Allah for the heart of His servant; for Allah is greatly concerned about the hearts of His righteous servants lest they should be attached to other than Him, or turn toward someone .apart from Him

The Shaykh cited the example of Prophet Ibrahim ('a) and how he was

attached to his son Isma'il, thus Allah commanded him to slaughter him; and the example of Ya'qub and his fondness toward Yusuf, due to which Allah separated him from Ya'qub for a number of years. This is why the heart of a person ought not to be attached to other than Allah, the Blessed, the Exalted, otherwise he would be .dishonest in the claim of His love

Then the Shaykh brought the story of Fudayl bin 'Ayad when he was holding the hand of his little daughter and kissed it. So she said to him, "Dear father, do you love me?" He replied, "Yes, my little daughter." She said, "By Allah, I did not think of you to be a liar until today!" He said, "And how is that? Why would I lie?!" She answered, "For I thought that because of the state of God-wary you are in, you would not love anyone else." So the man wept and said, "O my Master! Even the small children have unveiled "!the pretension (riya') of Your servant, Fudayl

And the like of these anecdotes with which Shaykh ash-Shalabi tried to calm us and avert what had struck us of grief due to the calamity which had befallen him, and the .state of our being ashamed because of spending that night with him

So we left and came back the next morning and buried Ruhiyyah. We did not hear any voice of wailing, nor did anyone utter a distasteful word. We did not see

.but manifestations of patience and submission to Allah, the High, the Great

Love 'of' Allah and 'for' Allah

We ought to answer the following question that this interpretation of ‘sincerity in love of Allah’ could be seen to be contradicting the human nature (fitrah); for Allah, the Exalted, has created man with love for different things as well as dislike for different things. Now, sincerity in love of Allah, as explained above, seems to stand in contrast .with this nature according to which Allah has created mankind

The answer to this question is that sincerity in love of Allah does not mean the rejection of the human nature. Rather it means directing one’s love (hubb) and dislike (kurh) according to what Allah likes and dislikes. Allah, the Exalted, does not want from his servant, nor did he want from Musa bin ‘Imran, to take out the love of his family from his heart. Rather, what He wants from him is that his love for his family should be through his love of Him, and His love should be the only source of all other kinds of .love in his heart

In other words, that which Allah wants from His servant, and wanted from Musa (‘a), is to tie all kinds of love with His love. As a result, one’s love for his family would be, in .this case, a consolidation of the love of Allah in a person

This is a profound concept and a beautiful method of education (tarbiyah) which none can comprehend but those

.whom Allah has chosen and singled out for His love

The Holy Prophet (S) , who is the greatest of all mankind in sincerity and purity, used to say, "{Two things} have been made dear to me from your world, women and perfume; and the delight of my eyes is in the prayers (salat)."(۱)

No doubt that this love in the speech of the Prophet (S) is a love which is in extension to the love of Allah. The dearest of these three to the heart of the Messenger of Allah (S) is indeed the prayers, as it is the delight of his eyes. And there is no doubt in the fact that the Prophet's love for them was in extension to his love of Allah.

Therefore, 'sincerity in love of Allah' does not lead to destruction of the human nature or cause disturbance in it. Rather, it entails a reconstruction of the structure of love and hatred in human life based on this new criterion presented by Islam.

Accordingly, the natural love and inclination of man remains intact, but within a new arrangement, which, in fact, contributes to the strengthening of one's love of Allah, instead of weakening it and causing confusion in it.

For this very reason there has been enormous emphasis in the Islamic narrations on the value of 'love of Allah and for Allah'. For instance, Imam 'Ali bin Abi Talib ('a) is narrated to have said, "Love for Allah is the closest kinship."(۲)

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۱- Al-Khisal, pg.۱۶۵.

۲- Mizan al-Hikmah, vol.۲, pg.۲۳۳.

is also reported to have said, “Love of Allah is much stronger than the womb relation.”(1)

The above expression is precise and depends on an important intellectual principle. There is indeed a diversity of blood relationships and close ties in the lives of the people. The firmest of these relations is the womb relation. Now, according to the above tradition, the relation with Allah is much stronger even than the womb relation. Thus, if a person ties his love and attachment to this relation, and if he succeeds in organizing his love and hatred based on it, then all his relations would become the strongest and the most perfect of relations.

The reason they would become the firmest of relations is that if a relation is for the sake of other than Allah, then it is prone to change and upheaval, as it can be affected with things which can alter the attitude of a person toward the other. But if the love of a person for his brother in faith is for the sake of Allah, then it would be firm and strong, and more enduring in the face of different conflicting elements and factors.

‘Sincerity in love of Allah’ not only does not negate the natural attachments of a human being, but it also strengthens and consolidates it after he has organized them based on the ‘main course’ {i.e. the course of the love of Allah}, which plays an exclusive role in directing the love of the truthful ones

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۱- Ibid.

.siddiqin) and the friends of Allah)

Thus, the best of the people in the eyes of Allah would be the one who is more loving toward his brother in faith, for the sake of Allah. Imam as-Sadiq ('a) says: "No two believers meet except that the best of them is the one more ardent in love for his (brother."(١

He ('a) is also reported to have said, "Those who love each other for the sake of Allah shall be on the pulpits of light on the Day of Judgement, such that the light of their bodies and the light of their pulpits would illuminate every thing to the extent that they will be known by it; and it will be said {about them}, 'These are those who love each (other for the sake of Allah."(٢

It has been narrated that Allah, the Exalted, once revealed onto Musa bin 'Imran ('a), "Have you ever performed a deed for Me? He answered, 'I have performed prayers (salat) for You, I have fasted {for You}, I have given charity {for You}, and I have '.been remembering You

So Allah, the Blessed, the Exalted, said, 'As for the prayers, they are your proof (burhan); fasting is {your} shield (junnah); charity is {your} shade (zill); and the remembrance is {your} light (nur). So which deed have you performed for Me?' Musa ('a) said, 'Show me a deed which is solely for You.' He {the Exalted} said, 'O Musa! Have you ever loved a friend of Mine

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.Bihar al-Anwar, vol.٧۴, pg.٣٩٨ -١

.Ibid, pg.٣٩٩ -٢

for My sake, or have you ever hated My enemy for My sake?' Thus Musa came to know that the best of deeds is the love for Allah and hatred for Allah."(۱)

This narration is profound in meaning, for one may perform prayers out of love for Allah, as he may perform it so that it may serve as a proof for him in the Heaven. Likewise, he may fast out of his love for Allah, as he may do so in order for it to serve as a protective shield for him against the Fire. But love of the friends of Allah and hatred of His enemies cannot be except out of one's love for Him, the Exalted.

The First Source of Love

point

From where should we draw the love of Allah? This is an important question in our discussion. Now that we have known the value of the love of Allah, we must know where to derive this love from and what is its source?

A brief answer to this question is that Allah Himself is the source of this love, its origin and goal. We will now explain this in detail.

۱. Allah Loves His Servants

Indeed Allah loves His servants, He provides for them, protects them, bestows upon them His blessings and bounties that none is able to count, forgives them, turns toward them clemently, covers their shortcomings, grants them success, guides them to the right path, takes care of them with His patronage and grace, and averts evil and calamity from them. All these are signs of

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۱- Ibid, vol.۶۹, pg.۲۵۳.

.His love toward his servants

Allah Confers upon His Servants His Love and Affection .۲

Among the signs of Allah's love for his servants is that He loves them and blesses them with His love. However, the affair of this love is very strange; for it is Allah who is the bestower of love, and it is He who receives love from His servants. He endows them with attraction (jadhbah) after attraction, and thereafter He draws them toward .Himself with that attraction

We find frequent indications to this concept in the Islamic narrations and supplications. In the whispered prayer of al-'arifin (the knowers), Imam Zayn al-'Abidin ('a) says: "O Allah, make us among those within the gardens of whose breasts the trees of yearning for You have taken firm root, and the assemblies of whose hearts have been seized by the ardour of Your love." We have already .explained this phrase earlier

In the munajat of al-mu'tasimin (those who seek refuge), he ('a) says: "I ask You... to assign over us a protector through which You will deliver us from destructions, turn aside from us blights, and hide us from the striking of great afflictions; and to send down upon us some of Your tranquility, to wrap our faces in the lights of love for You, to give us haven in Your strong pillar; and to gather us under the wings of Your ".protection; by Your clemency and mercy, O Most Merciful of the merciful

Again in the munajat of al-zahidin (the abstainers), he ('a) says: "O Allah, induce us to

renounce it and keep us safe from it, by Your giving {us} success and by Your protecting {us} from sins. Strip from us the robes of opposing You, attend to our affairs through Your good sufficiency, amplify our increase from the boundless plenty .of Your mercy

Be liberal in our gifts from the overflow of Your grants, plant in our hearts the trees of Your love, complete for us the lights of Your knowledge, give us to taste the sweetness of Your pardon and the pleasure of Your forgiveness, gladden our eyes on the day of meeting You with the vision of You, dislodge the love of this world from our hearts, just as You have done for the righteous, Your selected friends, and for the pious, those whom You have singled out, by Your mercy, O Most Merciful of the ".merciful

In the supplement mentioned by Sayyid Ibn Tawus to the supplication of Imam al-Husayn ('a) on the Day of 'Arafah, the Imam ('a) supplicates to Allah with the following verses, "How can Your existence be proved through him who is dependent on You? Does other than You have an appearance (zuhur) which You do not possess, such that he would become the one to expose You? When have You become invisible such that You have needed a proof to point You out? And when have You been far away such that the effects (athar) would lead {us} to You? Blind is the eye which does not see You watchful over

itself, and the deal of one whom You have not given a share out of Your love is in ...loss

Guide me to You through Your light, and make me stand before You with true servanthood... and protect me through Your protected secret... and make me travel on the roads of the people of attraction (ahl al-jadhb). O Allah, suffice me from planning for myself through your planning for me, and from my choice through Your ...choosing for me, and keep me away from cases of anxiety and restlessness

You are the one who has caused the {rays of} light to shine on the hearts of Your friends such that they recognized You and attested to Your Oneness; You are the one who has removed {the love of} others from the hearts of Your lovers, such that they loved none but You and did not take resort to other than You; You are their companion when they are left lonely by the worlds, and You are the one who has guided them after they have been distanced from the signs and proofs. What has he ?found one who has lost You

And what has he lost one who has found You? Indeed he who is pleased with other than You as a substitute has gone wrong, and verily one who has sought other than You in exchange is in loss. How can one aspire for other than You whilst You have not stopped {Your} benevolence? And how can one ask

?from other than You while You have not changed {Your} way of generosity

O He who has made His lovers taste the sweetness of intimacy such that they stood before Him in praise; and O He who has clothed His friends with the clothes of His awe such that they stood before Him pleading for forgiveness... O Allah, seek me by Your mercy until I reach You, and attract me by Your favour so that I may turn toward (You."(١

Allah Shows His Affection toward His Servants .٣

Allah, the Exalted, reveals His love to His servants by showering upon them His blessings so that they might love Him. Indeed the bounties showered upon the heedful and intelligent hearts are effective in endearing Allah to them.

In his famous supplication at dawn, Imam Zayn al-'Abidin ('a) says: "You show Your love toward us through Your bounties, and we return You with sins; the good from You constantly descends upon us, while the evil from us ascends to You. The honoured angel has always been, and is still, bringing You the news of our ugly deeds, but that has not prevented You from continuing to embrace us with Your blessings, and to kindly provide us with Your bounties. Glory be to You! How clement You are, and how great You are, and how kind You are, as the beginner {of the creation} and (the eventual claimer {of it}."(٢

A comparison between what descends from Allah to His servants of His blessings, grace, benevolence, beauty, forgiveness and covering, and that which ascends

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.Ibid, vol.٩٨, pg.٢٢۶ -١

.Ibid, pg.٨۵ -٢

from the servants to Allah of evil and ugly deeds, gives rise to a sense of shame in a servant toward his Master, as he returns the love and affection from Him with avoidance and hatred toward Him. And how miserable and wretched is a man who returns Allah's love for him and His exhibition of His love for him, by avoiding Him and .turning away from Him

Just ponder over these words of the supplication of al-iftitah from Imam al-Hujjah ('a), "You call me and I turn away from You, You show me affection and I show hatred towards You, You display Your love for me and I do not accept {it} from You, as though I am above You. But this did not prevent You from having mercy on me, being ".good to me, and favouring me

(Sources of Supplications in the Heritage of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a

point

We have incredible riches of supplications in the narrations of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) and .subtle concepts in the whispered prayers (munajat) transmitted to us from them

The Importance given by the Companions of the A'immah to the Recording of the Ahadith

The companions of the A'immah ('a) used to display extreme keenness in recording .what the A'immah would impart to them in the form of prayers

Sayyid Radiyy ad-Din Ibn Tawus says in his book Muhaj ad-da'awat while mentioning the prayer of jawshan as-Saghir attributed to Imam Musa al-Kazim ('a), Abu al-Waddah Muhammad bin 'Abdillah bin Zayd an-nahshali relates from his father 'Abdullah bin Zayd, who was among the companions of Imam al-Kazim ('a), "'Abdullah bin Zayd reports that there was group from among

the special companions of Abu al-Hasan al-Kazim ('a), from his family members and followers, who used to attend his sittings while they had within their cloaks straight .and bent tablets made of hard black wood

If he uttered a word or gave a verdict on legal issues, they would record what they heard from him. Of the other things 'Abdullah {bin Zayd} has reported is what they heard from {the Imam} saying in his prayer... and then he mentioned the famous ".(supplication of jawshan as-Saghir narrated from Musa bin Ja'far ('a

The Four Hundred Treatises of Hadith

The companions of Imam as-Sadiq ('a) had compiled four hundred treatises from his speech which came to be famously known as the Four Hundred Treatises (al-usul al-.(arba' mi'ah

Shaykh Amin al-Islam at-Tabrasi (d.۵۴۸ H) says in his book A'lam al-Wara, "Four thousand of the well-known scholars have narrated {reports} from Imam as-Sadiq ('a) and they have compiled four hundred writings known as al-usul out of his answers to different questions. The practice of the compilers of the usul (may Allah have mercy on them) was to give importance to the recording and writing of what they heard from ".(the A'immah of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a

In his book ash-Shamsayn, Shaykh al-Baha'i says: "It has reached us from our masters (mashayikh) -may Allah have mercy upon them– that it was the practice of the compilers of the usul that whenever they heard a hadith from one of the A'immah ('a), they would immediately record it in their usul so that they

".might not forget part or all of it in the long run

It was due to this fact that these treatises (al-usul) were relied upon by the scholars, such that if they related a tradition from them they would consider it as correct and reliable.

After mentioning the Four Hundred Treatises in chapter twenty nine of his book ar-rawashih, Muhaqqiq ad-damad asserts, "Let it be known that narrating {a tradition} from the authentic and reliable {Four Hundred} usul is one of the fundamental criteria (arkan) for the authentication of a tradition (riwayah)."

In fact, a great number of the companions of the A'immah ('a) had undertaken the responsibility of writing the usul such that it is not possible to give a detailed account neither of their names nor their treatises. Shaykh at-Tusi (may Allah have mercy on them) says in this regard in the beginning of al-Fihrist, "And I do not guarantee to give a complete anthology; for the writings of our associates (ashab) and their treatises (usul) are almost unrecordable due to their being scattered in different cities."

However, their number is certainly not less than four hundred, as it has been stated by Muhaqqiq Agha Buzurg at-Tahrani in his work adh-dhari'ah.(١)

In his previously mentioned work, Muhaqqiq ad-Damad says: "It is common that the Four Hundred Treatises have been written down by four hundred writers from the disciples of Abu 'Abdillah as-Sadiq ('a). Moreover, there were around four thousand people attending his sittings and relating from him. Their books and

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١- Ad-Dhari'at ila Tasanif ash-Shi'ah, vol.٢, pg.١٢٩.

writings are many, but those which have come to be considered as authentic, and are relied upon, and which have been named as al-usul, are these Four Hundred ".Treatises

The Burning of the Heritage of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) at the Hands of Tughril Beg

These treatises together with other texts from the heritage of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), including the works on supplications, were destroyed when the book library which was endowed (waqf) by the minister Abu Nasr Sabur bin Ardeshir (the Shiite minister appointed by Baha' ad-dawlah al-Buwayhi) was set on fire. This library was the most .known in those days, the most flourishing and the greatest of its kind

The actual existence of this library has been mentioned by al-Yaqut al-Hamawi in Mu'jam al-Buldan (۲:۳۴۲) under the entry 'bayn as-Surayn'. He says: "Bayn as-Surayn which is an area in the Karakh district of Baghdad is among the most beautiful areas and the most populated of it." He further says: "Therein was the book library which was endowed by the minister Abu Nasr Sabur bin Ardeshir, the minister of Baha' ad-.dawlah bin 'Adud ad-dawlah al-Buwayhi

There were no books in the world better than what it contained, as all of them were handwritten by authentic scholars and they were their notable treatises (usul). It was burnt along with other parts of Karakh when Tughril Beg, the first king of the Saljuq dynasty, entered Baghdad in ۴۴۷ H. Among these books which were set on fire by ".(Tughril Beg were the books of supplications transmitted from the Ahl al-Bayt ('a

After quoting these words of al-Hamawi, Muhaqqiq

at-Tahrani (may Allah have mercy on him) says: "I say that it is suspected that part of the books of this library –which was endowed for the Shi'ah and established for them in their location, in the Karakh of Baghdad- were the treatises on supplication (al-usul ad-du'aiyyah) which the earlier companions of the A'mmah ('a) had narrated from them. In the biographies of each of them(۱), the masters of rijal have accredited to each of them a book which they referred to as kitab al-ad'iyah(۲), stating their chain (of narration to that book from its author."(۳

Immunity of Part of the Heritage of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) from being Destroyed

A group of these usul were collected by Shaykh at-Ta'ifah Abu Ja'far at-Tusi (may Allah have mercy on him) when he compiled al-Istibsar and at-Tahdhib in Baghdad. Two libraries that contained the fundamental usul were at the disposal of Shaykh at-Ta'ifah during this period.

One of them was the library of Sabur, which was established for the Shiite scholars in Karakh, in Baghdad, while the other was the library of his tutor, Sharif al-Murtada, which was estimated to have contained eighty thousand books. Some of these books remained up until the time of Ibn Idris al-Hilli (may Allah have mercy on him) from which he compiled Mustatrafat as-Sara'ir.

Immunity of Part of the Source Books on Supplication from being Lost

Agha Buzurg at-Tahrani says in adh-Dhari'ah, "In general, these treatises (usul) on supplication which were in the Shapur library, with either a general or specific title, were all destroyed by the fire as explained by Yaqut. However, we did not lose anything from them except for their

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۱- {trns: i.e. each of the earlier companions of the A'immah ('a).}

۲- {trns: The book of supplications.}

۳- Adh-Dhari'ah, vol.۸, pg.۱۷۴.

.objective existence

Otherwise, with regard to their content, of the supplications, the formulas of remembrance (adhkar) and the visitations (Ziyarat), they have reached us exactly in the same way as they were recorded in those treatises (usul). This is because many years before the date of the burning {of the library} some of the great scholars had already written books on supplication, a'mal and Ziyarat, drawing all that which they .(brought in their books from the treatises on supplication (al-usul ad-du'aiyyah

These books which were composed out of those treatises before the burning {of the library} continue to exist up to this day, like Kitab ad-du'a' of Shaykh al-Kulayni (d.۳۲۹ H), Kamil al-Ziyarat of Ibn Qulawayh (d.۳۶۰ H), Kitab ad-du'a' wa al-Mazar of Shaykh as-Saduq (d.۳۸۱ H), Kitab al-Mazar of Shaykh al-Mufid (d.۴۱۳ H), and Rawdat al-'Abidin ".(of al-Karajaki (d.۴۴۹ H

Supplications handed down to Us Intact through Misbah al–Mutahajjid

Among the source books on supplication which have drawn from the earlier treatises (usul) is Misbah al-Mutahajjid of Shaykh at-Ta'ifah Abu Ja'far at-Tusi (d.۴۶۰ H). After his arrival in Iraq in the year ۴۰۸ H, at-Tusi extracted -from the earlier treatises which were at his disposal in Sabur Library and the library of his teacher Sharif al-Murtada- traditions of jurisprudence (ahadith al-ahkam) and thus compiled Tahdhib al-Ahkam and al-Istibsar, and also compiled Misbah al-Mutahajjid consisting of supplications and a'mal, which he extracted from the earlier treatises (usul) as far as those who .spend the night in vigil (mutahajjidin) could endure

Sources of Supplication that reached Ibn Tawus

Some of the sources of supplication which remained intact in

the event of the burning of Sabur Library continued to exist uptil the seventh century H and reached Sayyid Radiyy ad-din bin Tawus (d.۶۶۴ H), may Allah have mercy on .him

In chapter fourty two of his book Kashf al-Mahajjah, which he had composed for his son, Sayyid Ibn Tawus says: "Indeed Allah, the Majestic, has facilitated for you many books at my hand... and Allah, the Majestic, has {also} facilitated for me a number of ".volumes of prayer books (da'awat) which are more than sixty volumes

When Sayyid Ibn Tawus wrote Muhaj ad-da'awat, he had with him some seventy volumes of works on supplication. Toward the end of Muhaj ad-da'awat, he says: "This is the last of what I could recall... if we were to record more than this and all that which is in our knowledge, we would exceed what we had intended to record, for there are more than seventy volumes of books on supplication in our library at this ".moment

Sayyid Ibn Tawus also mentions in his book al-Yaqin -which is among the last of his works- that the number of books on supplication with him had reached seventy."(۱)

One Thousand Five Hundred Sources of Hadith and Du'a' with Ibn Tawus

When Sayyid Ibn Tawus authored his great work on supplication known as al-Iqbal, he had with him one thousand five hundred books, according to what ash-Shahid has said in his collection (majmu'atihi) which al-Jaba'i narrated from a copy with his handwriting. This was in the year ۶۵۰ H in which Sayyid Ibn Tawus completed his book :al-Iqbal. Shahid says

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.Adh-Dhari'ah, vol.۲, pg.۲۶۵ -۱

He {i.e. Ibn Tawus} had at his disposal one thousand five hundred books in the year "
(٦٥٠ H."(١

Fifteen Books of Sayyid Ibn Tawus on Supplication and Adhkar

In his book Falah as-Sa'il, Sayyid Ibn Tawus says that when he went through the book al-Misbah al-Kabir on supplication which belonged to his maternal grandfather, .Shaykh Abu Ja'far at-Tusi, he found it to be very beneficial

However, Ibn Tawus found many other additions which Shaykh at-Tusi had not brought in his book. Hence, he decided to compose a book titled Tatimmat Misbah al-Mutahajjid wa Muhimmat fi Salah al-Muta'abbid in fifteen volumes, which would .supplement al-Misbah al-Kabir

In the preface of his book Falah as-Sa'il, Sayyid Ibn Tawus writes, "With the help of Allah, the Majestic, I am going to arrange that in a couple of volumes, anticipating to achieve what I have intended to compile of the important and supplementary .{{prayers

I have named the first volume: Falah as-Sa'il, which consists of the {recommended} .acts during the day and night. This is in two volumes

.'The third volume: Zahrat ar-rabi' fi ad'iyat al-asabi

.'The fourth volume: Jamal al-usbu' bi kamal al-'amal al-mashru

.The fifth volume: Ad-duru' al-waqiyat min al-akhtar

.The sixth volume: Al-midmar li as-Sibaq wa al-lihaq

.The seventh volume: As-Salik al-muhtaj ila ma'rifat manasik al-hujjaj

The eigth and ninth volumes: Al-iqbal bil a'mal al-hasanat fima nadhkuruhu mimma .yu'mal miqatan wahidan kulla sanat

The tenth volume: I have named it As-Sa'adat bil 'ibadat allati laysa laha waqtun mahtum wa ma'lum fi ar-riwayat bal waqtuha bi hasab al-hadithat al-muqtadiyat

.wal-adawat al-muta'alliqat biha

If Allah grants me success to complete these books

p: ۳۰۹

.Adh-Dhari'ah, vol.۲, pg. ۲۶۴ ۲۶۵ -۱

based on what I anticipate of His grace, then I hope that each of these books be the first of its kind which no one has preceded me with the like of it, and I hope them to be among the essentials for he who intends to do ‘ibadah and prepare himself for the .return (ma’ad) before death

.I have named the first part: Falah as-Sa’il wa najah as-Sa’il fi ‘amal yawm wa laylat

.’The second part: Zahrat ar-rabi’ fi ad’iyat al-asabi

The third part: Ar-ruju‘ fi Ziyarat wa ziyadat salawat wa da’awat al-usbu‘ fi al-layl wa .an-nahar

The fourth part: Al-iqbal bi al-a’mal al-hasanat fima yu’mal marratan wahidah kulla .sanat

.The fifth part: Asrar as-Salawat wa anwar ad-da’awat

If Allah, the Majestic, allows me to author this final volume, then I would withhold it the rest of my life, unless he who has the permission allows me to give it to someone (before my death.”(١

Later Source Books of Supplication

Agha Buzurg at-Tahrani (may Allah have mercy on him) writes, “Thereafter, a group of scholars have added to what Sayyid Ibn Tawus had recorded in his works numerous supplications and a’mal also attributed to the A’immah (‘a) and which were collected in the earlier works of supplication and which were not at the disposal of Sayyid Ibn Tawus. They were guarded against burning, drowning and moth-worms, and thus reached them. Hence, they brought those prayers in their works on :supplication. Among these scholars are

.Shaykh Muhammad bin Makki who was martyred in ٧٨۶ H .١

Shaykh jamal as-Salikin (the beauty of .٢

.Falah as- Sa’il, pg.٧٩ -١

the wayfarers), the author of the present al-Mazar, Abu al-'Abbas Ahmad bin Fahd al-Hilli (d.۸۴۱ H), {also} the author of 'Uddat ud-Da'i and at-Tahsin fi Sifat al-'Arifin.

۳. Shaykh Taqi ad-Din Ibrahim al-Kaf'ami (d.۹۰۵ H), the author of Junnat al-Aman al-Waqiyah, al-Balad al-Amin and Muhasabat an-Nafs, all of which contain prayers and adhkar transmitted from the A'immah ('a). He clearly asserts in the beginning of his book al-Junnah that he had collected them from reliable works, which he was {academically} bound to adhere to their content. He mentioned as sources of al-Junnah and al-Balad over two hundred books and gave reference to them in the text of both his works. Most of these books are among the earlier works on supplication, like Rawdat al-'Abidin of al-Karajaki (d.۴۴۹ H).

۴. Shaykh al-Baha'i (d.۱۰۳۱ H), the author of Miftah al-Falah.

۵. Muhaddith Fayd al-Kashani (d.۱۰۹۱ H), the author of Khulasat al-Adhkar.

۶. Al-Majlisi (d.۱۱۱۱ H). He is the one who collected and preserved {the ahadith}, and thereafter compiled them in the volumes of al-Bihar in Arabic, and in Zad al-Ma'ad, Tuhfat al-Za'ir, Miqbah al-Masabih, Rabi' al-Asabi' and Miftah al-Ghayb, which are all in Persian."(۱)

Supplication and the Divine Decree and Destiny

point

Indeed there is a Divine decree (qadar) and destiny (qada') with regard to each and every thing in the universe, such that there is no way for man to refrain from it, as it is an irrevocable Divine will (iradah).

In this case, what is the position of supplication in relation to this Divine will? Can supplication change

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۱- Adh- Dhari'at ila Tasanif ash-Shi'ah, vol.۸, pg.۱۷۹ ۱۸۰.

something which has been subjected to the invariable will of Allah and is already in His knowledge? What is the benefit of supplication if it cannot alter the definite Divine decree and destiny? And if supplication has a role in changing the Divine decree and ?destiny, then how is this accomplished

In order to answer this question, it is necessary to enter into the issue of the Divine decree and destiny, and also the issue of bada'. Since addressing this issue might take us away from our current discussion on prayer (du'a') to a philosophical discussion, we will try to avoid the philosophical complexities of the issue, talking about it lightly .and briefly to the extent that it is related to the answer

The Law of Causality in History and the Universe

The law of causality ('illiyyah) operates in the course of history as well as in the universe in form of a general and an irrevocable law, without there being any :exception to it. Some of the Qur'anic verses pertaining to this fact are

- "To Allah belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. He creates whatever He wishes."(۱)
- "Indeed Allah does what He desires."(۲)
- "Indeed your Lord does whatever He desires."(۳)
- "All that We say to a thing, when We will it, is to say to it 'Be!' and it is."(۴)
- "Had Allah willed, He would have taken away their hearing and sight."(۵)
- "But Allah singles out for His mercy whomever He wishes."(۶)
- "Allah provides whomever He wishes without any reckoning."(۷)
- "And Allah gives His

۱- Qur'an, ۴۲:۴۹.

۲- Qur’an, ۲۲:۱۴.

۳- Qur’an, ۱۱:۱۰۷.

۴- Qur’an, ۱۶:۴۰.

۵- Qur’an, ۲:۲۰.

۶- Qur’an, ۳:۳۷.

۷- Qur’an, ۲:۱۰۵.

(kingdom to whomever He wishes."(1)

- "Say, 'O Allah, Master of all sovereignty! You give sovereignty to whomever You wish, and strip sovereignty of whomever You wish; You make mighty whomever You wish, and You abase whomever You wish; all good is in Your hand. Indeed You have power over all things.'"(2)

- "If He wishes, He will take you away, O mankind, and bring others {in your place}."(3)

The Qur'an is replete with these verses and the like of them. They are clear in that Allah, the Exalted, has the absolute power over the universe, nothing can delimit Him, render Him incapable, or stop Him from doing what He wishes. He has power over everything; He does what He wants and He is not questioned about anything, but they are questioned.

The Jews had a belief that the will (iradah) of Allah is subject to the general system of causality which reigns over the universe and history. According to them, Allah has no control on the universe or history after He has created them. Referring to this view, the Qur'an says:

"The Jews say, 'Allah's hand is tied up.' Tied up be their hands, and cursed be they for what they say! Rather, His hands are wide open."(4)

Hence, there is no doubt in whatever we have mentioned above, and the Qur'an is clear in all that and in condemning the Jews for what they believe in.

The Relation between the Divine Will and the Law of Causality

In the light of this power which the Qur'an affirms for the Divine will in the universe,

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۱- Qur'an, ۲:۲۴۷.

۲- Qur'an, ۳:۲۶.

۳- Qur'an, ۴:۱۳۳.

۴- Qur'an, ۵:۶۴.

history, and society, it is natural for us to ask about the relation of the Divine will to the law of causality. Does it mean suspension (ta'til), in the sense that the will of Allah ?suspends the law of causality whenever He wills that

The answer to this is of course negative; for it is He who is the creator of the cause ('illah) and none other than Him. Creating the 'cause' is necessarily creating its .causality ('illiyyah). If He creates fire, then He has created the heat also

The creation of fire without heat is similar to the creation of an even number without its being even!(۱) Accordingly, it is not possible that Allah creates the fire without it being the cause of heat, unless if He changes its entity to something other than fire .but which resembles fire

Therefore, there is no way to entertain the opinion that the dominion of the will of .Allah over the universe and history implies the suspension of the law of causality

In this case, what then can be the relation between the Divine will and the principle of ?causality

The Reign of the Divine Will over the Law of Causality by Itself

The Qur'an elucidates this relation and defines it in many places, stating that Allah, the Exalted, has absolute control and power over the law of causality by the very law .of causality, without suspending or nullifying it

The Qur'an does not suspend the will (iradah) of Allah as the Jews do, nor does it ;nullify the law of causality as the Ash'arite do

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۱ – With a slight difference that the first is among the requirements of existence .((wujud), while the second of quiddity (mahiyyah

rather it affirms the sovereignty of Allah over the universe by the very law of .causality

As a result, when He, the Exalted, wills to bestow His blessings on a people, He sends :the winds as a glad tiding before His mercy

“It is He who sends forth the winds as harbingers of His mercy”(۱),

“It is Allah who sends the winds and they raise a cloud”(۲),

“And We send the fertilizing wind and send down water from the sky.”(۳)

Thus, He is the one who sends down water from the sky, but by sending {first} the fertilizing winds. When He wills to give good news of His mercy to a people, He would send to them winds as sign of His mercy so that they may raise the clouds. Thereafter, He would send to them rainfall which would cause their lands to produce .what Allah has deposited in it of His mercy

In conclusion, when Allah intends to shower His blessings on a people, He blesses them through its means (asbab). Similarly, when He decides to punish a people, He .does so through its means

:With regard to His punishment on the people of Fir’awn, Allah says

“Certainly We afflicted Pharaoh’s clan with droughts (sinin) and loss of produce, so that they may take admonition.”(۴)

According to this verse, the punishment on the people of Pharoah and their admonition was accomplished through the drought. ‘Sinin’ in the above verse is the plural of ‘sanat’ which means drought

In brief, if

p: ۳۱۵

۱- Qur’an, ۷:۵۷.

۲- Qur’an, ۳۵:۹.

۳- Qur’an, ۱۵:۲۲.

۴- Qur’an, ۷:۱۳۰.

Allah willed to bless a community, He would do so by employing its means, such as the winds and the clouds. On the contrary, if He intended to punish a people, He would do .so through its specified means, such as drought and shortage of rainfall

The Law of Mediate Causation

The law of mediate causation (Qanun at-Tasbib) implies that Allah, the Exalted, in order to achieve what He desires, employs means which would actualize His will :(iradah). The following verses of the Qur’an point out to this fact

١. “Whomever Allah desires to guide, He opens his breast to Islam, and whomever He desires to lead astray, He makes his breast narrow and straitened as if he were (climbing to a height.”(١

This verse has clear indication to the point we have just mentioned. Allah, the Exalted, guides a people or misleads them by means of their own deeds. Therefore, when He wills to guide a given community, He will employ for this purpose a means (sabab) which would actualize what He has willed, thus He opens their breasts to Islam. In contrast, if He desires a people to go astray, He will employ means which would actualize what He has desired; accordingly He makes their breasts narrow and .straitened

٢. “And when We desire to destroy a town, We command its affluent ones {to obey Allah}, but they commit transgression in it, and so the word becomes due against it, (and We destroy it utterly.”(٢

According to this verse, when Allah intends to annihilate

١- ۶:١٢۵ ,Qur’an.
٢- ١٧:١۶ ,Qur’an.

a nation because of their own actions, He would take up a means (sabab) which would lead to their corruption. Thus, He would make them affluent, and this affluency (tarf) would lead the affluent ones to transgression (fisq); as a result, the word would become due against them.

۳. "When Allah promised you {victory over} one of the two companies, {saying}, 'It is for you', you were eager that it should be the one that was unarmed. But Allah desires to confirm the truth with His words, and to root out the faithless."(۱)

When Allah had willed to establish the truth (haqq) and wipe off the infidels through those of the Muslims who stood by the Holy Prophet (S), He chose for them the way of 'arms' as a means to actualize this aim.

In the same manner that Allah has made the way of arms and munitions a means for the perfection of the Muslims, their guardianship and leadership over the people on the face of this earth, similarly He has made the affliction with comfort (lin) and affluency (tarf) a means for the eradication of a nation whose destruction Allah has already ordained.

۴. "So let not their wealth and children impress you; Allah only desires to punish them with these in the life of this world, and that their souls may depart while they are faithless."(۲)

Thus Allah takes up from among their wealth and offspring a means (sabab) to punish and destroy them.

The Law of Facilitation

The law of facilitation

۱- Qur'an, ۸:۷.

۲- Qur'an, ۹:۵۵.

tawfiq) is very close to that of mediate causation (tasbib). This law implies that Allah) .(places his servant in the course of means (asbab) leading toward the good (khayr

For instance, when Allah wills the well being of a sick person, He would direct him to a physician who is able to diagnose his illness, and direct him to consume a medicine which would cure his ailment. Likewise, if Allah desires good for His servant, He leads him to the means of good (khayr) and guidance. And if He wills to bestow upon him a provision (rizq), He would lead him to the means of provision; and if He decides the .opposite of this, then He would keep the servant away from its means

The Absolute Reign of Allah's Will in the Universe

All that we have said above is in the hand of Allah and subject to his command and :power. The following verses attest to this fact

- "Whatever mercy Allah unfolds for the people, no one can withhold it; and whatever He withholds, no one can release it after Him, and He is the All-mighty, the All-wise."(١)
- "Indeed Allah carries through His command."(٢)
- "If Allah helps you, no one can overcome you, but if He forsakes you, who will help you after Him?"(٣)
- "And when Allah wishes to visit ill on a people, there is nothing that can avert it, and they have no protector besides Him."(۴)
- "Indeed your Lord does whatever He desires."(۵)
- "Indeed Allah does whatever He desires."(۶)

This

.Qur'an, ۶۵:٣ -١

.Qur'an, ۶۵:٣ -٢

۳- Qur’an, ۳:۱۶۰.

۴- Qur’an, ۱۳:۱۱.

۵- Qur’an, ۱۱:۱۰۷.

۶- Qur’an, ۲۲:۱۴.

is what exactly the meaning of Allah's dominion over the universe means,

"...the Sovereign, the All-holy, All-benign, the Securer, the Dominant..."(1)

The Relation between the Will of Allah and the Law of Causality

The last word with regard to the relation between the will (iradah) of Allah and the law of causation is that there is no doubt that this law is operative in the universe in an all-inclusive and a definite manner. However, this law is subject to the will (mashi'ah) of Allah, and not dominant over it; rather it is the iradah of Allah which is dominant over this law.

Nonetheless, the command of the will of Allah over the law of causation does not mean the annulment or suspension of this law, and how can this be possible when this law is among the creations of Allah, as mentioned earlier. Rather, it means that Allah, the Exalted, suspends what He wills out of these means (asbab) and makes effectual what He desires of them. He freely acts in the universe and thus gives sovereignty to whomever He wishes, and strips sovereignty of whomever He wishes, but through its specified means.

It is due to this very reason that man is unable to predict the future of the universe and history in respect to their causes, as the will of Allah may intervene in the affair, changing the means and causes according to His desire.

For instance, if anyone of us were to predict the future of a battle between a powerful and a weak army, he would foresee victory for the

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1- Qur'an, ٥٩:٢٣.

strong army and defeat for the weaker side. But if Allah wills the weaker side to triumph over the powerful side, He would arrange for that causes (asbab) which are normally unexpected. Thus, He would cast fear in the hearts of the stronger side, and strength and resolution in the hearts of the smaller army. He would make the move of the smaller side steady and sound, causing their affairs to run to their benefit; and the move of the other side unsteady, causing them to commit military errors. Accordingly, .the smaller army would overpower the larger army by the will of Allah

A large or small number is not the only factor which determines the fate of a battle. However, this does not mean that a large number is not among the factors of victory, or the 'small number' is not among the factors of defeat; rather what we mean is that .victory has other factors as well, as 'defeat' has different factors

Accordingly, when Allah wills the triumph of the smaller party, He would prepare for them its factors, as they are in His hand; similarly, if He wills the larger party to get defeated, He would pave the way for their defeat, as this also is in His hand. He, the :Exalted, says

Those who were certain they will encounter Allah said, 'How many a small party has" (overcome a larger party by Allah's will! And Allah is with the patient.'"(١

Change in Allah's Decree in Creation

This is exactly the meaning of 'change in

.Qur'an, ٢:٢٤٩ -١

Allah's decree' (bada') in respect to the creation. Bada' is the change in the course of .events in the universe and history in accordance with the will (iradah) of Allah

How many a times has mankind been on the brink of falling -if the law of causation were to be operative in the lives of the people, but the will (mashi'ah) of Allah intervened in the appropriate moment and rescued mankind from falling, in contrary .to the course required by the law of causation

Nonetheless, this does not imply the suspension or the nullification of the law of causality, rather the will (iradah) of Allah, the All-mighty, overrides the law of causality by itself. This overriding and the implications it involves run against the understanding .of the people and their perception of the chain of causes and effects

Now, this Divine overruling of the law of causality which takes the people by surprise and makes them err in their calculations is what is known as bada', about which there .(are many narrations from the Ahl al-Bayt ('a

With bada' there occurs an unexpected change in the universe, history and society. Thus, those whom people did not expect to triumph would become triumphant, and those whom they could not think of being defeated would get defeated; the .oppressed would come to power, and the kings would be humiliated

Obliteration and Affirmation

Bada' as explained above is the very phenomenon of obliteration (mahw) and :affirmation (ithbat) which has appeared in the Qur'an

Allah effaces and confirms"

(whatever He wishes, and with Him is the Mother of the Book."(١)

The Mother of the Book (umm al-kitab) is the knowledge of Allah, known in the tongue of the traditions as al-lawh al-mahfuz (the guarded tablet). There does not occur any obliteration or change in it, nor does Allah come to know of something after being .ignorant of it

Shaykh as-Saduq narrates in Ikmal ad-din from Abu Basir and Suma'ah, who reported from Imam as-Sadiq ('a), "Whoever thinks that Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, comes to realize something which He did not know of yesterday, then you (should dissociate yourselves from him."(٢)

It is worthy of note here that the obliteration (mahw) takes place in the book of creation (kitab at-Takwin) and not in the Mother of the Book (umm al-kitab), which denotes the knowledge of Allah; for the knowledge of Allah is unchangeable. The change and alteration occurs in affairs related to the universe, society and history, in .respect to the causes that Allah employs for them

Ayyashi relates from Ibn Sinan who narrated from Imam as-Sadiq ('a), "Allah sends' forth what He wishes, and delays what He wishes; He effaces what He wishes and confirms what He wishes, and with Him is the Mother of the Book." He ('a) then said, "Anything which is willed by Allah is there in His knowledge before He creates it. Nothing appears to Him (yabdu lahu) except that it is in His knowledge {from before}. Indeed Allah does not come to know

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.Qur'an, ١٣:٣٩ -١

.Bihar al-Anwar, vol.۴, pg.١١١ -٢

(something} after being ignorant of it."(1)}

Ammar bin Musa narrates that once Imam As-Sadiq ('a) was asked about the verse,' "Allah effaces and confirms whatever He wishes..." He ('a) answered, "Indeed that book is a book {from} which Allah effaces and confirms whatever He wishes. It is from it that supplication (du'a') averts the Divine destiny (qada'). It is written on such a du'a' that this is the one through which the qada' is averted. But when the matter ends up to the Mother of the Book (umm al-kitab), then the supplication will have no (effect on it."(2)

Therefore, Allah establishes whatever He desires from this universal system which is operating by His command based on the law of causation, and obliterates from it .whatever He wishes

For example, the natural course of causes may require a person to die of a particular illness. Here, Allah may confirm it, and accordingly the course of causes would lead to his death by His will and command; or He may efface it if He wishes, hence He would .pave the way for his well-being through its specified means

Consequently, the phenomenon of obliteration (mahw) would come to transpire in the universe. But with regard to the Mother of the Book, there does not occur any obliteration or change in it, as it is not possible that Allah would come to know of .something He was initially unaware of it

The obliteration occurs in the world of creation (takwin) -which is functioning based on the system

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.Ibid, pg.۱۲۱ -۱

.Ibid -۲

.(of cause and effect- according to the Divine wisdom (hikmah) and mercy (rahmah

Hence, when the wisdom and mercy of Allah necessitates a change in the course of events in the universe or a society, He would prepare for this change its specified means, and efface what was to transpire in the universe or a society based on the law of causation, were it not for the will of Allah.

This system is subject to the command of Allah both at times of obliteration and affirmation, and the power of Allah is in force within it. Thus, if Allah confirms something in it, it will come to take place by His will and order; and if He alters and effaces it, it shall change by His command and power.

The Effect of Belief in Bada'

Belief in bada' comes after the belief in tawhid in importance. This is because disbelief in bada' is tantamount to dissociating the will (iradah) of Allah from the running of the universe, and dismissing His dominance over the course of the universe and society, and giving an upper hand to the law of causality over the will of Allah, as believed by the Jews, "Allah's hand is tied up."(۱)

The correct view which the Qur'an presents is, "Rather His hands are wide open", and there is nothing to delimit His power and His hand is stretched out over the universe and the society.

This is the first effect of the belief in bada', which is in fact related to one's belief

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۱- Qur'an, ۵:۶۴.

in Allah, the Exalted. The second effect is with respect to one's relation with Allah. The reason being that belief in the open-handedness of Allah, in all situations, in changing and altering what has been necessitated by the cause-and-effect system, prompts a person to take resort to Allah in all his needs and affairs. And the most effective way in attracting man to Allah and tying him to Him is supplication to Allah for his needs and .requirements, at times of difficulties

In contrast, if man finds no way to change the Divine decree and destiny, and does not see any advantage or benefit in supplication with respect to changing the course .of events, he would not take resort to Allah for his needs and requirements

The reason people take refuge in Allah is because they believe that there are two kinds of Divine destiny (qada'); a definite destiny which has been written by Allah in the Mother of the Book, and which in no way can change or alter; and an indefinite destiny which is subject to change and alteration by the will of Allah. Thus, people take .resort to Allah for His response (ijabah) to their needs and prayers

'Supplication and Bada

There are numerous factors which lead to the intervention of the Divine will (iradah) in :changing the course of causes and events. Some of them are as follows

:Faith (Iman) and God-wariness (taqwa). He, the Exalted, says .١

,If the people of the towns had been faithful and Godwary"

(We would have opened to them blessings from the heaven and the earth."(1)

2. Gratitude to Allah (shukr):

"If you are grateful, I will surely enhance you {in blessing}."(2)

3. Asking for forgiveness (istighfar):

"But Allah will not punish them while you are in their midst, nor will Allah punish them while they plead for forgiveness."(3)

4. Supplication (du'a') and calling out to Allah:

a. "And before that Nuh, when he called out, We responded to him and delivered him and his family from the great agony."(4)

b. "And Ayyub, when he called out to his Lord, 'Indeed distress has befallen me, and You are the most merciful of the merciful.' So We answered his prayer and removed his distress, and We gave him {back} his family along with others like them, as a mercy from Us, and an admonition for the devout."(5)

c. "And the Man of the Fish, when he left in a rage, thinking that We would not put him to hardship. Then he cried out in the darkness, 'There is no God except You! You are immaculate! I have indeed been among the wrongdoers!' So We answered his prayer and delivered him from the agony, and thus do We deliver the faithful."(6)

In conclusion, the rule of Allah, the Exalted, extends all over the universe, and there is nothing in it which can limit His dominion or render Him incapable. However, this dominion prevails through the very chain of causes (asbab) without suspending the cause-and-effect system.

Moreover,

۱- Qur'an, ۷:۹۶.

۲- Qur’an, ۱۴:۷

۳- Qur’an, ۸:۳۳.

۴- Qur’an, ۲۱:۷۶.

۵- Qur’an, ۲۱:۸۳ ۸۴.

۶- Qur’an, ۲۱:۸۷ ۸۸.

Allah effaces from this system whatever He wishes by His power and command, and confirms whatever He desires by His will. The phenomena of obliteration (mahw) and affirmation (ithbat) take place only in the book of creation (kitab at-Takwin), and not in .(the Mother of the Book (umm al-kitab

If He obliterates something in creation, it is according to His wisdom and mercy. This obliteration is the very phenomenon of bada' regarding which there are many .(traditions from the Ahl al-Bayt ('a

Allah, the Exalted, brings about bada' due to many reasons, among them being istighfar, taqwa, Iman, shukr, and du'a'. And supplication is among the most :important factors which cause bada', as Allah, the Exalted, says

(Call Me, I will answer you."(١"

Visitation: Its Monotheistic and Political Dimensions

The Family of Monotheism in History

According to the Qur'an, the family of monotheism (tawhid) is one and a single family, whose links are connected to one another. The leader and the father of this family is .Prophet Ibrahim ('a), the friend of the All-merciful

:Allah, the Exalted says

He has chosen you and has not placed before you any obstacle in religion, the faith of" your father, Ibrahim. He named you 'muslims' before, and in this, so that the apostle (may be a witness to you, and that you may be witnesses to mankind."(٢

The Prophet of Allah (S) is the last of the prophets of this family. With him the earlier Divine messages have been concluded. This family is {like} a good (tayyibah) tree whose roots have spread all over, blessed are

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.Qur'an, ۴٠:۶٠ -١

.Qur’an, ٢٢:٧٨ -٢

its branches and off-shoots, sweet are its fruits, it is extended over the history, and it is a single family in the very words of the Qur'an:

"Indeed this community of yours is one community (ummah), and I am your Lord, so worship Me"[١],

and:

"Indeed this community of yours is one community, and I am your Lord, so be wary of Me."[٢]

The Qur'an gives utmost significance to exhibit the unity and coherence of this family, and to consolidate the relation between its different parts and elements, and to deepen the relations within it.

The position of this emphasis lies at the core of the Islamic education methodology, with the aim of displaying the unity of this family, deepening the sense of being related to it, insisting on the inheritance of monotheism and monotheistic values within this family, generation after generation; and strengthening the relationship among the different links of this family.

Moreover, in introducing the symbolic and righteous men (salihin) of this family, there is an exemplar and pattern for the people in their lives.

The Inter-connectedness and Reunion between Generations of this Family

The following are examples of the importance given by the Qur'an to this interconnection between the links of this family in history, and the significance given by it in connecting its present to the past, and the subsidiary to the principal:

١. To create a mutual acquaintance within the family, reminding it of its righteous (salihin) members, paying tribute to them by their names, and celebrating their remembrance.

This matter has been given great

۱- Qur'an, ۲۱:۹۲.

۲- Qur'an, ۲۳:۵۲.

importance in the Qur’an. The following are some examples of it:

- “And mention in the Book Mary, when she withdrew from her family to an easterly place.”(١)
- “And mention in the Book Ibrahim. Indeed he was a truthful one, a prophet.”(٢)
- “And mention in the Book Musa. Indeed he was exclusively dedicated {to Allah}, and an apostle and a prophet.”(٣)
- “And mention in the Book Isma‘il. Indeed he was true to his promise, and an apostle and a prophet.”(۴)
- “And mention in the Book Idris. Indeed he was a truthful one, a prophet.”(۵)
- “And remember Our servant Dawud, the man of strength.”(۶)
- “And remember Our servant Ayyub, when he called out to his Lord, ‘The devil has visited on me hardship and torment.’”(٧)
- “And remember Our servants Ibrahim, Ishaq, and Ya‘qub, men of strength and insight. Indeed We purified them with the exclusiveness of the remembrance of the abode {of the Hereafter}.”(٨)
- “And remember Isma‘il, Alyasa‘, and Dhu al-Kifl, each {of whom was} among the elect.”(٩)

٢. Establishing a relation between the different links of this family, based on peace (salam) and removing rancour, hatred and jealousy from the generations of this family, and connecting their present to the past, the children to their parents, and the descendants to their ancestors. The relation on the basis of peace is the most distinct and the best of relations within any family. Allah, the Exalted, says:

- “And We left for him a good name among posterity. Peace be to Nuh, throughout the nations!

۱- Qur'an, ۱۹:۱۶.

۲- Qur'an, ۱۹:۴۱.

۳- Qur'an, ۱۹:۵۱.

۴- Qur'an, ۱۹:۵۴.

۵- Qur'an, ۱۹:۵۶.

۶- Qur'an, ۳۸:۱۷.

۷- Qur'an, ۳۸:۴۱.

۸- Qur'an, ۳۸:۴۵ ۴۶.

۹- Qur'an, ۳۸:۴۸.

"Thus indeed do We reward the virtuous. He is indeed one of Our faithful servants."[1]

- "And We left for him a good name in posterity. Peace be to Ibrahim!"[2]
- "And We left for them a good name in posterity. Peace be to Musa and Harun!"[3]
- "And We left for him a good name in posterity. Peace be to Ilyas!"[4]
- "And peace be to the apostles! All praise belong to Allah, Lord of all the worlds."[5]

A relation founded on peace requires unity at inception, unity of goal, unity in the course of action, unity in resolution to actualize the goal, unity of method, and unity in attitude and opinion. Without such a comprehensive unity, 'peace' would make no sense.

۳. The relationship of inheritance between generations of this family, such that the righteous descendants inherit from their ancestors monotheism (tawhid), the monotheistic values, and the calling toward monotheism.

With regard to this, Allah, the Exalted, says:

- "Then We made heirs to the Book those whom We have chosen from Our servants."[6]
- "Certainly We gave Musa the guidance and We made the Children of Israel heirs to the Book."[7]
- "And those who are watchful of their prayers (salat). It is they who will be the inheritors."[8]
- "As for those who hold fast to the Book and maintain the prayer, indeed We do not waste the reward of those who bring about reform."[9]

It is based on this relationship that the descendant takes monotheism and its values from the ansector, so that

۱- Qur’an, ۳۷:۷۸ ۸۱.

۲- Qur’an, ۳۷:۱۰۸ ۱۰۹.

۳- Qur’an, ۳۷:۱۱۹ ۱۲۰.

۴- Qur’an, ۳۷:۱۲۹ ۱۳۰.

۵- Qur’an, ۳۷:۱۸۱ ۱۸۲.

۶- Qur’an, ۳۵:۳۲.

۷- Qur’an, ۴۰:۵۳.

۸- Qur’an, ۲۳:۹ ۱۰.

۹- Qur’an, ۷:۱۷۰.

.he in turn could pass on these values to the generations to come

To strengthen the sense of being related to this family. Prophet Ibrahim (‘a) has .۴ been considered by Allah, the Exalted, as the leader of this family, the father of all .monotheists (muwahhidin), as he (‘a) has considered them to be his offspring

This clear and explicit affiliation to this family connects different generations of this .family to one another with the strongest of bonds and relations

:Allah, the Exalted, says

He has chosen you and has not placed before you any obstacle (haraj) in the religion,“ the faith of your father, Ibrahim. He named you ‘muslims’ before, and in this, so that (the apostle may be a witness to you, and that you may be witnesses to mankind.”(۱

The command of Allah to the generations of this family to follow in the footsteps of .۵ the prophets, the messengers, the righteous (salihin) and the truthful (siddiqin) .amongst the members of this family, in the past and present

:Allah, the Exalted says

- (In the Apostle of Allah there is certainly a good exemplar for you.”(۲“
- There is certainly a good exemplar for you in Ibrahim and those who were with“ (him.”(۳
- There is certainly a good exemplar for you in them –for those who look forward to“ (Allah and the Last Day.”(۴

After the Qur’an mentions a number of the apostles of Allah and His righteous friends, it orders mankind to follow them, take guidance from them, and glean something

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.Qur’an, ۲۲:۷۸ -۱

.Qur’an, ۳۳:۲۱ -۲

.Qur’an, ۶۰:۴ -۳

.Qur’an, ۶۰:۶ -۴

.from their light

:He, the Exalted, says

This was Our argument that We gave to Ibrahim against his people. We raise in rank" whomever We wish. Indeed your Lord is All-wise, All-knowing. And We gave him Ishaq and Ya'qub and guided each of them. And Nuh We had guided before, and from .his offspring, Dawud and Sulaiman, Ayyub, Yusuf and Harun

Thus do We reward the virtuous. And Zakariyyah, Yahya, 'Isa and Ilyas –each of them among the righteous. And Isma'il, Alyasa', Yunus and Lut -each We graced over all the nations. And from among their fathers, their descendants and brethren –We chose them and guided them to a straight path... They are the ones whom Allah has (guided, so follow their guidance."(١

۶. The relation of supplication (du'a'); the prayer of the following generation for the preceding one. This is the most remarkable and the best of relationships between the descendants and their ancestors, which is manifested in the testimony given by the succeeding generation for the preceding one in their being forerunners in faith, and .praying to Allah on their behalf for forgiveness and mercy

And those who came in after them, who say, 'Our Lord, forgive us and our brethren" who were our forerunners in the faith, and do not put any rancour in out hearts (toward the faithful. Our Lord, You are indeed Most Kind and Merciful."(٢

Therefore, celebrating the life of the past generations of the monotheistic family and building a relation with them is among the genuine

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١- Qur'an, ۶:٨٨ ٩١.

٢- Qur'an, ۵٩:١٠.

.(methods of Islam in education and training (tarbiyah

For building such a relationship and preserving its continuity, there is a distinct culture specific for this purpose, and the Holy Qur'an urges the believers to maintain this relationship and connection throughout the generations within this Muslim family, which is extended from the time of Prophet Ibrahim ('a), rather from the time of Prophet Nuh ('a), to this day, through such great and resolute prophets as Musa bin 'Imran, 'Isa bin Maryam, and among them being the Seal of the Prophets, . (Muhammad (S

This continuity and relation between the generations is among the most significant (characteristics of the family of monotheism (tawhid).(١

The Visitation

After we have known that 'continuity', 'inheritence', 'harmony', 'meeting with each other', and 'mutual love' between the generations of monotheism are among the properties of Islam, this leads us to the fact that the means that crystallize the 'reunion' between these generations, and express the feelings of the descendants toward their ancestors, form the very core of the Islamic education methodology for .actualizing this aim

۴Visiting the graves of the prophets and their successors ('a), and those of the friends (awliya') of Allah and the righteous (salihin) of His servants, sending salutations (salam) on them, praying (du'a') for them, and giving testimony that they maintained prayers (salat), gave zakat, and bid what is right and forbid what is wrong, are among the most important factors of the crystallization of this 'reunion' between the .generations of the believers

In these visits

By the family of tawhid we mean those who have not deviated from the path of - ١ .monotheism

which the believers pay to the graves of the friends of Allah and the believers, and what it involves of sending salutations, prayers, and giving testimony, the believers express all their feelings toward the community of the believers who preceded them in faith, established prayers, gave alms, enjoined the good and forbade the wrong, took up the mission of inviting toward the Oneness of Allah before this generation, paved the way for it to Allah, made the people worship Allah, and raised -before this .generation- the word of tawhid amidst the people

Now, to all this good, there must be a sense of loyalty (wafa'). Ziyarat is a declaration of this loyalty; the loyalty and allegiance of the children to their forefathers. Likewise, there also must be some kind of testimony to this role of leadership played by the earlier generations in inviting people to the Oneness of Allah, in maintaining prayers and giving zakat. Again, Ziyarat is an assertion of this testimony of the children for .their forefathers, and of the descendants for their ancestors

Ziyarat is also an expression of peace and love in the relation of the descendants with their ancestors, and an embodiment of what Allah has commanded of the inter-connectedness, love and respect amongst the believers, taking the righteous as an .exemplar, remembering them, reminding others of them, and celebrating their lives

In actual fact, the believers instinctly perceive all this during their visits to the graves of the prophets, the righteous ones and the believers. It

has been proven that the companions of the Holy Prophet (S) used to visit the graves of the martyrs of the battle of Uhud, including that of Hamzah ('a). As we also have authentic reports that Lady Fatimah ('a), daughter of the Holy Prophet (S) , would keep up visiting the grave of Hamzah ('a), and in most of her visits she would offer .prayers, make supplication and dhikr, and turn toward Allah, while at his grave

In any case, the texts of the Ziyarat that have been transmitted to us are replete with .all these concepts

However, it is surprising to see that some of the Islamic sects rebuke the Muslims for giving importance to visiting the graves of the prophets and the leaders (a'immah) of the Muslims and the righteous men, and for giving significance to prayers and .supplication at their graves

This view, which maintains that visiting the graves of the prophets and the righteous men is a wrong act and is equivalent to ascribing partners to Allah (shirk), is an exception to the general state which the Muslims are accustomed to in visiting the graves of the righteous, and praying, supplicating, and remembering Allah at their .graves

We do not know the reason behind this opinion except that it seems that such people have not understood correctly this Islamic ritual, and the concepts and values it .entails

I do not understand what kind of wrong act this is that the Muslims have not ,abstained from it

!despite all the opposition and severity in prohibiting them from it in the last fifty years

In this case, we either suspect the understanding of the Muslims in respect to their .religion, or we suspect these people in their understanding of tawhid and shirk

.May Allah guide us all and direct us to His pleasure on the straight path

A Study of the Concepts which have Appeared in the Texts of the Ziyarat

In the transmitted texts of the Ziyarat of the Holy Prophet (S) and the A'immah of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), we come across various kinds of concepts. We will give here two .examples of these concepts

The first example is of concepts regarding the political and dynamic relation between the nation (ummah) and its leader (imam); whilst the second example is concerning the concepts related to the personal relation that exists between the visitor (za'ir) and .the Imam

In this section, we shall discuss what has appeared in the texts of the Ziyarat with .respect to each of the above two areas

The Political and Dynamic Aspect in the Ziyarat

The ideological ('aqaidi) and political matter occupies a larger part of the texts of the Ziyarat transmitted from the Ahl al-Bayt ('a). By the ideological and political matter, I mean the issue of the divine successorship (imamah) and authority (wilayah) after the . (Holy Prophet (S

This issue has a strong connection with all that befell the Muslims during the times of the Banu Umayyah, the Banu 'Abbas and after them, of the deviation from the genuine path of Islam, its thought and culture. In

other words, during the reign of Islam, people who could not be trusted with Islam, the Muslims and the wealth of the Islamic world, came to power and caused great .harm to Islam and the Muslims

The practice of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) was resistance and opposition to the two political powers which were contemporaneous with them. This political resistance and opposition to the two powerful and prosperous systems, such as the Umayyad and the Abbasid rule, left such a lucid effect on the Shiite thought, culture and literature that they came to be known since then as ar-rafidah, since they rejected (rafd) the .authority of the Umayyad and the Abbasid caliphs

The Shiite political thought and literature took on the shade of ‘rejection’ after Mu’awiyah assumed the caliphate -through means and ways known to everyone- .during the time of Imam al-Hasan (‘a) up until the fall of the Abbasid rule

This political contention and opposition is explicitly reflected in the supplications reported from the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a), particularly in the Ziyarat of Imam Amir al-Mu’minin ‘Ali bin Abi Talib (‘a) and Imam al-Husayn (‘a); as the period of these two Imam was the severest of the periods in the history of Islam as far as this contention and .encounter is concerned

Perhaps this is the reason behind the huge number of Ziyarat reported in the case of Imam Amir al-Mu’minin (‘a) and his son al-Husayn (‘a), and their difference in quantity and quality from the Ziyarat of the rest of

.(the A'immah ('a

The political matter in these Ziyarat can be summarized, as mentioned earlier, in the testimony (shahadah) and the stance (mawqif). The first has to do with judgement .((qada'), whilst the second with politics (siyasah

Taking a stand comes after giving testimony; for a political stand in any given dispute and difference is resolved within the sphere of the judgement reached. The just and sound judgment is decisive between the two opposing sides. Thereafter, and in the light of the decision reached by the judicial authority, the political stand takes shape. And the best of the judicial authorities is the human conscience (damir) and the justice .(that Allah has deposited in his innate nature (fitrah

Now, in this Divine court, the visitor (za'ir) gives testimony for the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) that the right (haqq) is theirs' (lahum) and it is with them (ma'ahum), and he testifies against their opponents and adversaries that they deviated from the truth and were inclined toward the falsehood (batil) and took the wrong way in the field of .confrontation and dispute

Thereafter, based on this testimony, he takes up a political stand in relation to both sides of the dispute together, loyalty and devotion (wala') to one side and dissociation (bara'ah) from the other; inclination toward one side and the rejection of the other; .prayers and salutations (salam) to one side and curse (la'nah) on the other

(We will now cite the actual texts of the Ziyarat reported from the Ahl al-Bayt ('a

.'regarding each of the elements of 'testimony' and 'stand

Testimony .١

a. Testimony to the Messengership of the Prophet (S) in the First Stage of the Conflict

The conflict –as asserted by 'Ammar al-Yasir, may Allah have mercy on him- is twofold, and not a single conflict; a conflict over the revelation (tanzil) as was the case in the battles of Badr and Uhud, and a conflict over the interpretation (ta'wil) as in the battles of Jamal, Siffin, and at-Taff (١). Both these conflicts are still on up to this day .and continue to exist in our contemporary life

With regard to the conflict over the revelation, we read in the Ziyarat of the Holy Prophet (S) , "I bear witness, O Messenger of Allah, together with every witness, and I stand witness irrespective of any denier {that} you conveyed the message of your Lord, were sincere to your nation, struggled in the way of your Lord, endured hardships for His sake, called on to His path with wisdom and with good and proper .advice

And that you delivered the truth that was entrusted to you; and that you were kind to the believers and severe with the infidels, and you worshipped Allah until the inevitable came to you. So may Allah elevate you to the most honourable place of the noble ones, and to the highest station of the near ones, and to the loftiest station of the messengers, such that none could join you, nor excel you, nor precede you, nor ".desire to reach you

We also read in the Ziyarat of the martyrs of Uhud, "I give witness

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{.The battle of Karbala' {trns -١

that you struggled in the way of Allah with a struggle due to Him, and defended the religion of Allah and His Prophet, and sacrificed your lives for his sake. And I bear witness that you were killed on the path of the Prophet of Allah. May Allah reward you on behalf of His Prophet and Islam and its followers, with the best reward; and may we recognize your faces in {the heaven of} His pleasure with the messengers, the ”.truthful, the martyrs, and the righteous; and excellent companions are they

b. Testimony for the Imam (‘a) in the Second Stage of the Conflict

This is a testimony given by the visitor (za’ir) within the sphere of the dispute over the interpretation (ta’wil). The following are the phrases from the Ziyarat of Amir al-:(Mu’minin (‘a

O Allah, I bear witness that he conveyed on behalf of Your Prophet what was trusted“ to him, and took care of what was consigned to him, and preserved what he was entrusted with; he regarded as lawful (halal) the lawful of Allah, and considered the .unlawful (haram) of Allah as unlawful

He established Your laws, and struggled (jahada) in Your way against those who broke their allegiance (nakithin), and those who transgressed (qasitin) the limits of Your laws, and those who deviated (mariqin) from Your command, with patience, anticipating the reward from You, {and} without paying heed in Your affair to the ”.blame of any blamer

In the Ziyarat of the Holy Prophet (S) specific for the day he was declared as the prophet (mab’ath), we come across the following

:(description of Imam ‘Ali (‘a

You were a kind father to the believers, and to the infidels you were crude, harsh and“ furious. You were {like} rain, a fertile land, and a banner {of guidance} for the believers. Your argument never failed, your heart never strayed, your insight never faltered, and you were never cowardly. You were like a mountain that the violent .winds could not shake, nor the thunders destroy it

You were as the Holy Prophet (S) had said: strong in your body, humble in your heart, magnanimous near Allah, great on the earth, and revered in the heavens. No one could find a fault with you, nor could any speaker speak ill of you, nor did anyone have an eye for what you had, nor did anyone find respite from you {regarding the law of Allah}. The weak and the humiliated is strong and mighty with you until you take back for him his right, whilst the strong and mighty is weak with you until you take the right ”.{of the weak} from him

c. Testimony on the Second Part of the Dispute on the Interpretation

The first part of the dispute on the interpretation is represented by the battle of Siffin, while the second part of this dispute is the battle of at-Taff. In Karbala’, this clash comes to the fore in an explicit manner, such that it does not contain any ambiguity .for one who has a heart, or gives ear, being attentive

In this encounter, al-Husayn (‘a) together with seventy two of his family members, companions and a

group of believers who did not participate in the battle for one reason or the other, are on one side; whilst Yazid and the family of Umayyah and their army from Sham .and Iraq are on the other side

In this battle each of the two conflicting sides comes to the fore with its reality, without any ambiguity. Al-Husayn ('a) emerges with the guidance of the prophethood, whilst Yazid appears with the arrogance of the transgressors, tyrants, and .oppressors

The Battle of at-Taff was indeed a separating line between the two sides, such that after it no one up to this day has remained in obscurity with regard to this dispute, or has not been able to distinguish the truth from the falsehood, except for those whose light Allah has taken away, and has sealed their hearts and hearing, and has blind-.folded them

It is within the framework of this conflict that the visitor (za'ir) of al-Husayn ('a), son of the Holy Prophet (S) , gives testimony for him that he established prayers, gave zakat and struggled (jahada) in the way of Allah. The visitor also confesses for the offspring of al-Husayn ('a) after him -in extension to this clash whose links are connected with one another after the event of Karbala'- with the Divine successorship (imamah), .authority (wilayah) and leadership (qiyadah) of the nation from Allah, the Exalted

Now, let us go through some of the phrases of this Ziyarat which contains this :shahadah

I bear witness that you conveyed from"

Allah what He had ordered you with and did not fear anyone other than Him. You strived in His way and worshipped Him sincerely until the inevitable visited you. I give testimony that you are the word of piety (taqwa), firm grip ('urwat al-wuthqa), and the argument {of Allah} over the remaining ones {of the people}. I bear witness that you .are the servant of Allah and His trustee

You conveyed {the message} sincerely and delivered {it} faithfully. You were killed as truthful (siddiq) and consigned your soul with certainty. You did not prefer blindness to guidance, and did not deviate from the truth to the falsehood. I bear witness that you established prayers, gave zakat, bid the good and forbade the wrong, followed the Prophet, recited the Book with the recitation due to it, and invited {people} to the way .of your Lord with wisdom and good advice

I stand witness that you stood on a manifest proof from your Lord, conveyed what you were commanded with, stood up for His truth, and believed in those who were before you without displaying weakness or causing others to do so. I give testimony that jihad is for you, and that the truth is with you and toward you, you are the man of ".truth and the origin (ma'din) of truth, and the heritage of prophethood is with you

d. Testimony for the Inheritance

point

This Divine successorship (imamah) that we bear witness to in this Ziyarat, and that which we bore witness to for al-Husayn ('a) and

his offspring after him, is not a kind of successorship which is discontinuous or perishable. Rather this imamah has its connection with the imamah of the leaders of monotheism in history before al-Husayn ('a); from the time of Prophet Adam ('a), Nuh and Ibrahim, until the time of the Holy Prophet (S), 'Ali and al-Hasan ('a).

Al-Husayn inherits this imamah with all its values, heritage, duties, responsibilities, and the call toward it, right from Prophet Ibrahim ('a) and his children.

"Indeed Allah chose Adam and Nuh, and the progeny of Ibrahim and the progeny of 'Imran above all nations; some of them are the descendants of the others, and Allah is All-hearing, All-knowing."(۱)

Now, al-Husayn ('a) was bearing this great heritage and its responsibilities, and he carried it with him to Karbala', so that he may argue with it against the people, defend it and fight for its sake. And this is communication in clear terms (al-balagh al-mubin) of this message which al-Husayn ('a) had inherited from the progeny of Ibrahim and 'Imran.

Therefore, the visitor (za'ir) of al-Husayn ('a) attests to this inheritance in the midst of this ferocious battle, and clearly asserts that the encounter of al-Husayn ('a) against Yazid is not disjointed from the encounter of Ibrahim ('a) against Namrud, nor from the encounter of Musa ('a) against Fir'awn, nor from the encounter of the Holy Prophet (S) against Abu Sufyan, nor from the encounter of Imam 'Ali ('a) against Mu'awiyah.

Secondly, he attests to the fact that

۱- Qur'an, ۳:۳۳-۳۴.

.the spirit of this encounter, in all its stages and links, is tawhid

Thirdly, he stands witness that the heritage which al-Husayn ('a) inherited from the progeny of Ibrahim and 'Imran, and with which he stood up in Karbala', is passed after him to the offspring of al-Husayn ('a) who are his inheritors, and to his followers and helpers -from amongst the Muslims- who took up the path of guidance of the .progeny of Ibrahim and 'Imran

Lets us go through the following phrases in the Ziyarat of warith (inheritor) regarding :the testimony for al-Husayn ('a) as the inheritor of the righteous ones

Peace be upon you, O the inheritor of Adam, the chosen one (safwah) of Allah. Peace" be upon you, O the inheritor of Nuh, the prophet (nabiyy) of Allah. Peace be upon you, O the inheritor of Ibrahim, the intimate friend (khalil) of Allah. Peace be upon you, O the inheritor of Musa, one who talked (kalim) with Allah. Peace be upon you, O the inheritor of 'Isa, the spirit (ruh) of Allah. Peace be upon you, O the inheritor of Muhammad, the beloved (habib) of Allah. Peace be upon you, O the inheritor of Amir ".al-Mu'minin, the friend (waliyy) of Allah

Although this inheritance of al-Husayn ('a) from the progeny of Ibrahim and 'Imran is confined to the descendants of one particular family, as is attested by the Qur'an, "Some of them are the descendants of the other", his inheritance from them is on a basis other

than his relationship with the Holy Prophet and Amir al-Mu'minin ('a) through prophethood; because the following basis appears immediately after the above testimony, "Peace be upon you, O son of Muhammad, the chosen one (al-mustafa). Peace be upon you, O son of 'Ali, the one Allah is pleased with (al-murtada). Peace be upon you, O son of Fatimah, the glowing one (al-zahra'). Peace be upon you, O son of Khadijah, the great (kubra)."

The Witness and the Witnessed for

The relation between the witness (shahid) and the witnessed for (mashhud) in the texts of the Ziyarat is very strange in its kind. In these testimonies, the visitor (za'ir) attests for the visited one (mazur) that: "You established prayers, gave zakat, bid the right and forbade the wrong, and strived (jihad) in the way of Allah with a striving due to Him."

Consequently, the visitor (za'ir) is the witness (shahid), and the 'witnessed for' (mashhud lahu) is the visited one (mazur); as the opposite is also correct. This is because the apostles of Allah, His messengers and their successors (awsiya') are witnesses over the nations, and the Holy Prophet (S) and his successors are witnesses over this nation. Regarding this, He, the Exalted, says:

- "The day We raise in every nation a witness against them from among themselves, We shall bring you as a witness againt these."(1)
- "O Prophet! Indeed We have sent you as a witness, as a bearer of good news and as a warner."(2)
- "Thus We have made you a middle

۱- Qur'an, ۱۶:۸۹.

۲- Qur'an, ۳۳:۴۵.

nation that you may be witnesses to the people, and that the apostle may be a witness to you.”[١]

- “so that Allah may ascertain those who have faith, and that He may take witnesses from among you.”[٢]
- “They are with those whom Allah has blessed, including the prophets and the truthful, the martyrs and the righteous, and excellent companions are they.”[٣]

Thus, the position of the visitors change from being witnesses (shahid) to that of being ‘witnessed for’ (mashhud lahu), and the position of those whom we address in the Ziyarat and testify for them that they maintained prayers, gave zakat, enjoined the good, and performed jihad, change from that of being ‘witnessed for’ to that of being witnesses.

The following has also appeared in some texts of the Ziyarat, “You are the straight path, and the witnesses in the transient world, and the intercessors in the eternal world.”

A phrase in the eighth Ziyarat of Amir al-Mu’minin (‘a) reads, “You advanced toward that over which you were witness, present, and witnessed for.”

٢. The Stand

point

In the judicial proceedings, ‘testimony’ is followed by ‘judgement’ (hukm); whilst in politics ‘judgement’ is followed by ‘stand’ (mawqif).

Taking a political stand requires clarity and unambiguity, firmness, offering, and preparing oneself for sacrifice.

Taking a stand in relation to events like those of Siffin and Karbala’ in the history of the Muslims is not only confined to those who were contemporaries with these events, rather it also includes those who ally themselves with the contemporaries of those

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۱- Qur'an, ۲:۱۴۳.

۲- Qur'an, ۳:۱۴۰.

۳- Qur'an, ۴:۶۹.

events in showing their pleasure (rida) and anger (sakhat), and love (hubb) and hatred (bughd), for what transpired.

This is one of the features of the days of separation (ayyam al-furqan)(1) in history; days in which people split into two distinct fronts and there remains no obscurity for anyone and the truth and the falsehood are not concealed from anyone, except if he is among those whose hearts have been sealed by Allah, and whose hearing and sight have been taken away by Him.

The days of separation continue to split and divide the people into two groups throughout history based on their agreement or disagreement, and love or hatred, toward what took place in the past; as they also reject the third front which is just an onlooker of the occurring events. The days of Siffin and Karbala' are among the days of separation.

Consequently, whoever investigates into the events of the battles of Badr, Siffin and Karbala', with a thorough understanding of both sides of the conflict, he would either stand beside this front and join it, or he would stand beside the other front and ally with it, as he cannot avoid both of them. This perfectly implies the 'stand' (al-mawqif).

May Allah have mercy upon Sayyid al-Himyari who reflects this advanced awareness about history and the clash between the truth and the falsehood in history, in some verses of his poem which are filled with awareness and a sense of responsibility for taking a stand. He says:

I indeed

۱- This is a Qur'anic concept taken from verse ۴۱ of chapter ۸. {trans.}

.adhere to what the successor adhered to, On the day of Jamal

And I adhere to what he adhered to on the day of Nahrawan, And his palm touched .mine at Siffin

.O Lord! I take responsibility of all that blood, And the like of it with it amin amin

The battle which took place in Siffin and Karbala' was a real battle of values. It did not end in Siffin by the lifting of the Qur'an and the appointment of the arbitrators, nor .'with the martyrdom of al-Husayn ('a) and his companions in Karbala

The reason there is special reference to the events of Siffin and Karbala' is that the decisive battles in the history of Islam, in my opinion, are three: the battle of Badr, .Siffin, and Karbala'; as they are also the days of separation (furqan) in Islamic history

This encounter and battle between the two sides extends up to this day. And this is what history is; it forms the basis of the political and cultural make up of the present of this nation (ummah), and it is not possible, nor is it correct, to detach the present .from the past

The children inherit the 'positions' (mawaqi') and the 'stands' (mawaqif) from their fathers. By 'positions', I mean the historical events, and, by 'stands', what man is obliged to say and to do with respect to the events. Hence, if the 'position' is a clash of values, and not a dispute over an island in the sea or on

a piece of land, then it will pass from one generation to another, cross the past and get connected to the present, and it will be inherited by the descendants from their .anscestors

In this case, it is not possible to detach the 'stand' from the 'position'. Consequently, the 'positions' are passed on to the present generation together with the 'stands' .they require in relation to each of the two sides of dispute

Moreover, this inheritance is not restricted to one group or the other. Rather as the righteous (salihin) inherit the heritage of their righteous ancestors, of their positions and stands, similarly the arrogant ones and their followers inherit the positions and .stands of their arrogant ancestors

In the texts of the Ziyarat reported from the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), we clearly see the notion of the 'inheritance of the stands' put in different ways. The following are examples of .'different forms of 'the stand

Friendship and Dissociation

Among the most obvious of these forms is friendship (wala') with the friends of Allah and dissociation (bara'ah) from the enemies of Allah. However, this friendship and dissociation are not mere concepts independent of the situation of the dispute and encounter, rather they are inseparable parts of the political stand vis-à-vis this clash .which has divided the Islamic arena into two groups

Let us now go through some phrases of the famous Ziyarat of al-jami'at al-kabirah :which refer to the concept of friendship

I take Allah as a witness and I take you as witnesses that I"

indeed believe in you and in what you have believed in. I reject your enemies and that which you have rejected. I have thorough knowledge of you and of the misguidance of those who opposed you. I am your friend and the friend of those who are your friends; I hate your enemies and I am hostile toward them. I am at peace with him who is at peace with you, and I am at war with him who is at war with you. I will affirm what you have affirmed as truth, and reject what you have rejected as falsehood.”

We read in the popular Ziyarat of the day of ‘ashura’:

“May Allah curse the people who set the foundation of oppression and injustice against you, the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a). And may Allah curse the people who ousted you from your position (maqam) and removed you from the stations (maratib) that Allah had placed you in.”

Part of the same Ziyarat says:

“O Allah, curse the first oppressor who committed injustice to the right of Muhammad and his Progeny, and {curse} the last of those who followed him in this. O Allah, curse the group that fought against al-Husayn and that which sided with it, paid allegiance to it, and followed it in killing him. O Allah, curse them all.”

In the lesser known(۱) Ziyarat of ‘ashura’, we come across the following phrases:

“O Allah, this is the day in which the adversity (niqmah) is revived, and the curse is sent down on

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۱- Ghayr al-Ma’rufah.

.Yazid and the family of Yazid and the families of Ziyad and ‘Umar bin Sa’d and Shimr

O Allah, curse all of them and curse him who is pleased with their speech and practice, with a great curse; and make them enter the heat of Your fire and make them dwell in the hell fire, as it is an evil destination; and make definite upon them, and upon anyone who sided with them, paid allegiance to them, followed them, helped them and gave consent to their deeds, that of Your curses with which You cursed every .oppressor, every usurper, and every denier

O Allah, curse Yazid, the family of Yazid and the progeny of Marwan, all of them. O Allah, multiply Your wrath, anger, punishment, and rancour on the first oppressor who committed injustice toward the progeny of Your Prophet. O Allah, and curse all those who have oppressed them; and avenge them, for indeed You are the one who takes ”.revenge from the evil-doers

Pleasure and Anger

Pleasure (rida) and anger (sakhat) are part of wala’ and bara’ah; being pleased with what the friends of Allah are pleased with, and being angry at that which they are .angry at

Pleasure, anger, love and hatred are among the most obvious signs of faith (Iman), and among the constituents of wala’ and bara’ah. Besides, they imply the real profundity of a political stand, for without them a political stance would be superficial .and non-resistant

It is such a relation and faith which stem from within

.a person that provide a political stand with resistance, firmness and profundity

The following phrases in the Ziyarat of Lady Fatimah ('a) refer to the elements of :pleasure and anger

I take Allah and His angels as witnesses that I am pleased with whom you are" pleased with, and angry with whom you are angry with. I dissociate myself from whom you dissociated yourself. I am a friend of whom you befriended and I am hostile toward whom you were hostile. I hate whom you hated and love whom you ".loved

Another phrase in the same Ziyarat says: "I bear witness that I am indeed the friend of he who befriended you, and an enemy of him who was your enemy. I am at war ".with him who was at war with you

Peace and Submission

Among the properties of a political stand are peace (silm) and submission (taslim). .Submission is a stage above that of peace

Hence, the stand must be, at the foremost, peaceful and bearing the mark of peace :(silm) toward Allah, His Prophet, friends, and righteous servants

;(O you who have faith! Enter into peace, all together"(۱"

:not having contaminated it by the stains of opposition to them

Do they not know that whoever opposes Allah and His Apostle, there awaits him..." ;(the fire of hell, to remain in it {forever}?"(۲

:nor with the stains of transgression and arrogance toward Allah

but do not overstep the bounds therein, lest My wrath should descend upon..." you."(۳), or with defiance, "Indeed the wrongdoers are steeped

١- Qur’an, ٢:٢٠٨.

٢- Qur’an, ٩:٦٣.

٣- Qur’an, ٢٠:٨١.

(in extreme defiance."(1)

Secondly, the stand must be founded on submission (taslim) and obedience (ta'ah) to Allah, His Prophet, and the Custodians of the affairs of the Muslims. The elements of peace and submission must leave their impression, at one time, in the heart, intention (niyyah), actions and the practice of a person. The spirit of peace, submission and .following (taba'iyyah) must occupy the heart

If this is the case and if a political stand is characterized with peace and submission in intention and practice, in exterior and interior, then even if the people were to come .together they would not be able to challenge such a stand with an opposite stand

It is in this case that a believer (mu'min) becomes a 'nation' (ummah) in himself, rising with the mission of the nation, possessing the firmness and resistance of a nation, as :was our father Ibrahim ('a) a nation in himself as asserted by the Qur'an

Indeed Ibrahim was a nation, obedient to Allah, upright, and he was not one of the" (polytheists."(2)

No stand can take shape in history without the elements of peace and submission, and nothing would remain of it if we were to separate these two elements from it, as they constitute the spirit (ruh) of every allegiance (bay'ah) to Allah, His Prophet and .the Leaders of the Muslims

This is because allegiance means that one should sell (yabi') to Allah at once everything that He, the Exalted, has granted him of opinion, love, hatred, endeavour, his

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.Qur'an, ۲۲:۵۳ -۱

.Qur'an, ۱۶:۱۲۰ -۲

self, property and children, and leave everything for the sake of Allah. Thereafter, he should not turn back and regret on what he sold to Allah, entertaining doubt in what he has done; because now he has sold everything to Allah and has already received its amount, thus there is no room for abrogation (iqalah) or withdrawal (istiqalah), as .he has embarked on a profitable bargain

This, in fact, constitutes the essence of a stand vis-à-vis the Guardians of the affairs of the Muslims and the Leaders of the believers. Ponder on the following phrases from :the Ziyarat of the Holy Prophet (S) and his Progeny, the leaders of the Muslims

۱. In the Ziyarat of the Holy Prophet (S) , "…Thus, my heart is in submission to you, and my support ready for you, until Allah decides for His religion {at the time of the re-appearance of the Twelfth Imam ('aj)}. I am with you, {only} with you, not with your ".enemy

۲. In the Ziyarat of Imam al-Hasan ('a), "Here I am, O caller to Allah. If my body could not answer you when you called for help, and my tongue when you asked for ".assistance, {then} my heart, hearing and sight have answered you

۳. In the Ziyarat of Abu al-Fadl al-'Abbas ('a), "My heart is submitted to you; I am your follower and my support is ready for you, until Allah decides, and He is the Best of ".judges

۴. In the Ziyarat of Imam al-Husayn ('a)

on the day of arba'in, "My heart is submitted to your heart; and my affair follows your affair, and my support is ready for you until Allah grants you permission. I am with you, {only} with you, not with your enemy."

This concept of 'being with you' which the visitor often repeats while expressing his stand and devotion to the leaders of the Muslims is the essence of 'the stand' and friendship (wala'); being with them both in ease and adversity, at times of peace and war, in comfort and happiness as well as in difficulty and hardship; and in this world and the Hereafter, by the will of Allah.

Praying for the Triumph of the Revenge

Among the other requirements of 'the stand' is praying for the triumph of revenge. When the stand is true, stemming from deep inside the heart, then one would beseech Allah, through all means, for the victory of the leader of the Muslims and the Muslims as well. Among these means is the prayer (du'a') to Allah for victory. Prayer is among the best and the finest of all these means, except that it does not dispense one with putting effort, offering and sacrifice.

The content of the prayer in support of the political stand has appeared in numerous texts of the Ziyarat reported from the Ahl al-Bayt ('a). The following are some examples:

۱. In the Ziyarat of Imam al-Mahdi ('aj), "O Allah, help him, and help Your religion through him, and help Your friends with him. O Allah, manifest justice through him,

and back him with victory, and help those who help him, and abandon those who abandon him. Shatter through him the tyrants among the infidels, and destroy the infidels and the hypocrites, and fill the earth with justice through him, and manifest ”.through him the religion of Your Prophet

Part of the prayer for the Twelfth Imam (‘aj) says: “O Allah, You have supported .٢ Your religion in all times with an Imam whom You had appointed for Your servants, and as a lighthouse in Your lands, after his cord has been joined to Your cord, and ...made him the means to Your good pleasure

O Allah, inspire Your guardian (waliyy) to give thanks for that which You have blessed him with, and inspire us with the like concerning him. Render him a favourable authority from Yourself and inaugurate for him with an easy inauguration. Help him with Your mightiest pillar, brace up his back, strengthen his arm, and guard him with Your eye. Defend him with Your safeguarding, help him with Your angels, and assist .him with Your victorious army

Through him establish Your Book, Your bounds, Your laws, and the norms (sunan) of Your Prophet (S), revive the guideposts of Your religion deadened by the wrongdoers, burnish the rust of injustice from Your way, sift the adversity from Your road, eliminate those who deviate from Your path, and eradicate those who seek .crookedness in Your straightness

Make his side mild toward Your friends, stretch forth his hand over Your

enemies, give us his clemency, his mercy, his tenderness and his sympathy, and make us his hearers and obeyers, strivers toward his good pleasure, assistants in helping ".him and defending him

Another Ziyarat of the Twelfth Imam ('aj) reads, "O Allah, fulfill that which You have .٣ promised to Your waliyy (friend). O Allah, manifest his word, promote his call, and .grant him victory over his enemy and Your enemy

O Allah, grant him a mighty victory, and inaugurate for him with an easy inauguration. O Allah, make {Your} religion strong through him after it has become weak, give rise to the truth through him after its decline, unveil through him the darkness, remove through him the sorrow, make the land peaceful through him, and guide mankind through him. O Allah, fill the earth through him with justice and equity as it has been ".filled with oppression and injustice

(Prayer for the Revenge (tha'r

Taking revenge and praying for it is part of the political stand. The stand of the family of monotheism (tawhid), right from the time of Ibrahim ('a) -rather from the time of Nuh ('a)- up to this day, has been one and the same stand, a single course of action, a .single point of set-off and a single goal

This stand (mawqif) extends from Prophet Ibrahim ('a) to the time of the re-appearance of al-Mahdi ('aj), from the Propgeny of Muhammad (S) , when Allah will bring to an end at his hand, with victory and triumph, this long journey which has been

full of blood and tears, victory and relapse, and ease and adversity. This is in order that Allah, the Exalted, may avenge on those who bar others from His way, and those .who have killed, oppressed and suppressed the leaders of this path and its followers

The greatest of all that which has befallen this family, of the misfortune, destruction and oppression, is the martyrdom of al-Husayn (‘a) in Karbala’ together with his .family members and companions

Hence, we ask Allah to make us among those who will take revenge, alongside al-Mahdi (‘aj), from these oppressors and those who came after them and their .followers, and from those who were pleased with their wicked acts

To take revenge on those who move on their line and follow their way and are pleased with their deeds, is something by which Allah would cool the hearts of the .community of believers, and infuriate the hypocrites and the polytheists

The concept of praying for the revenge has frequently appeared in the Ziyarat of al-Husayn (‘a) and that of his son Imam al-Mahdi (‘aj). An example of this is what has appeared in the lesser known Ziyarat of ‘ashura’, “O Allah, make us among those who seek his revenge along with the just Imam, through whom You will make Islam and its ”.followers mighty; O Lord of the worlds

Ziyarat within the Framework of Personal Relationship

It is within this framework that the state of mutual exchange in this relationship becomes more distinct and stronger, and the phenomenon of give-and-take between

.the za'ir (visitor) and the mazur (the one visited) becomes even more active

Among the most important features which become manifest as a result of this :relation between the za'ir and the mazur are

Prayer for the Holy Prophet and his Progeny, sending blessings on them, and . ١ seeking Allah's mercy for them: "O Allah, bless Muhammad and his Household with a blessing by which You will make for them plentiful Your gifts and generosity, and perfect for them Your bestowals and awards, and fill out their share of Your kindly (acts and benefits."(١

We read in the Ziyarat of the Holy Prophet (S) , "O Allah, bless Muhammad and his Progeny, and send Your benedictions on Muhammad and his Household, the best You have blessed, sent benedictions, showered mercy, showed affection and sent ".salutations on Ibrahim and the Progeny of Ibrahim

Praying for the Holy Prophet (S) and his Progeny that may Allah make them . ٢ mediators (wasa'il) to His mercy for His servants, and intercessors (shufa'a') with Him .on their behalf

A phrase in the Ziyarat of the Holy Prophet (S) reads, "O Allah, give Muhammad the mediation (wasilah), honour, excellence, and a noble position. O Allah, confer on Muhammad the most honourable station, the gift of peace, and intercession {for the followers of} Islam. Join us with him, such that we are not ashamed, nor among those ".who have broken their promise {with him}, nor regretful

In another Ziyarat of the Holy Prophet, we read, "O Allah, grant

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.Sahifat As-Sajjadiyyah, supplication no.۴٧ -١

him a {lofty} position, mediation to the Heaven, and raise him to such a praiseworthy ".station that the first and the last ones would covet it

Seeking recourse (tawassul) with the Holy Prophet (S) and his Progeny ('a), and .۳ implore for their intercession (shafa'ah) with the permission of Allah, "O Allah, make me distinguished in Your eyes in this world and the Hereafter, for the sake of Muhammad and his Household. O Prophet of Allah, I turn with your help toward Allah, your Lord and my Lord, that He may forgive me my sins, and accept from me my deeds, and fulfill for me my needs. So intercede on my behalf with your Lord and my Lord, for the best of those who have been asked and the best of the masters is my Lord, and you are the best intercessor, O Muhammad, upon you and your Progeny be ".peace

In the Ziyarat of the A'immah ('a) buried at al-Baqi', we say, "This is the position of one who has exceeded the limits, sinned and has been humiliated, who confesses what he has committed of the offences, and {now} anticipates salvation from the state he is in... so you be my intercessors, as I have come to you when the people of this world have turned away from you, and have taken the signs of Allah in derision, and are ".disdainful of them

In the Ziyarat of Hamzah ('a), the uncle of the Holy Prophet (S) , "I have come

to you from a distant place, asking {you} to set my soul free from the Fire, as my back has been burdened with my sins and I have committed what enrages my Lord. I find no one to flee to better for me than you, the Household of mercy; so be my ”.intercessor

Turning to Allah and asking Him to grant us their neighbourhood and companionship .۴ in the Hereafter, and firmness of stand on their guidance and path in this world, and that we may live and die in this world the way they lived and died, and that we may be resurrected in their company in the Hereafter, in the same manner that He, the .Exalted, endowed us with their guidance and love in this world

In the Ziyarat of the Holy Prophet (S) we come across the following phrases, “O Allah, I seek refuge in the generosity of Your face from placing me in the position of humiliation and disgrace, on the day the veils shall rip apart and the secrets shall be ;{disclosed and violent fear shall seize {the people

and the Day of Sorrow and Penitence; the Day of Drought, the Approaching Hour, the Day of Dispossession, the Day of Judgement, the Day of Requital, a day whose span is fifty thousand years, the Day of {the blow of} the Trumpet, the day when the Quaker quakes and is followed by the Successor, the Day of Resurrection, the Day of Exposition, a day when

mankind will stand before the Lord of all the worlds, the day when a man will evade his brother, his mother and his father, his spouse and his sons, the day the earth is split open and the flanks of the skies, the day when every soul will come pleading for itself, the day they will be returned to Allah and He will inform them about what they have done, the day when a friend will not avail a friend in any way."

After this round of asking the companionship of the Holy Prophet (S) and the friends of Allah on that dreadful day, the visitor (za'ir) says: "O Allah, have mercy on my stand on that day, and do not disgrace me in that site because of what I have committed against my self. O my Lord, make my coming out on that day with them, and my resurrection in the company of Muhammad and his Progeny ('a). Make his spring {of kawthar} to be the place of my arrival, and give me my book in my right hand."

We read in the Ziyarat of Abu al-Fadl al-'Abbas ('a), "May Allah gather us with you, and with His Prophet and friends."

The following has also appeared in some texts of the Ziyarat, "Strengthen for me a truthful stand (qadama sidqin) with al-Husayn and the companions of al-Husayn, who sacrificed their souls for al-Husayn ('a)."

In the supplication of 'Alqamah recited after the Ziyarat of 'Ashura', we read, "O Allah, make me live

the life of Muhammad and his Progeny, and make me die the like of their death. Take my soul while I am on their religion, and resurrect me in their company. Do not separate me from them even for a blink of an eye, forever, in this world and the ".Hereafter

A phrase in the lesser known Ziyarat of 'Ashura' reads, "O Allah, bless Muhammad and his Household, and make me live their life and make me die their death, and do not separate me from them in this world nor in the Hereafter, indeed You hear all ".supplications

Part of the Ziyarat of al-Jami'at al-Kabirah reads, "May Allah make me steady, throughout my life, on Your friendship and love, and facilitate for me to obey you, and grant me your intercession, and make me among the best of your adherents, who follows that toward which you had called, and make me among those who follow in your footsteps, move on your road, who are guided through your guidance, resurrected in your company, brought back to life at your return (raj'ah), given an office during your rule, honoured under your protection, granted power in your days, ".{and who will be delighted to see you tomorrow {in the Hereafter

A phrase in the Ziyarat of Abu al-Fadl al-'Abbas ('a) says: "May Allah gather us with ".you, and with His Prophet and friends, in the stations of the humble ones

In this way the bond between the visitor (za'ir) and the one visited (mazur) is

accomplished. It is a mutual relationship which involves, on the one hand, prayers, greetings and salutations on the ‘one visited’ from the visitor, while on the other, it entails prayer to Allah by the visitor, asking from Him the intercession of the ‘one visited’ and his companionship in the Hereafter. This is taking into consideration that the mediator in this relationship, from both sides, is Allah; as He, the Glorious, the .Exalted, is the one asked from (al-mas’ul), first and last

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درباره مرکز

بسمه تعالی

هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

آیا کسانی که می‌دانند و کسانی که نمی‌دانند یکسانند ؟

سوره زمر/ ۹

مقدمه:

موسسه تحقیقات رایانه ای قائمیه اصفهان، از سال ۱۳۸۵ هـ .ش تحت اشراف حضرت آیت الله حاج سید حسن فقیه امامی (قدس سره الشریف)، با فعالیت خالصانه و شبانه روزی گروهی از نخبگان و فرهیختگان حوزه و دانشگاه، فعالیت خود را در زمینه های مذهبی، فرهنگی و علمی آغاز نموده است.

مرامنامه:

موسسه تحقیقات رایانه ای قائمیه اصفهان در راستای تسهیل و تسریع دسترسی محققین به آثار و ابزار تحقیقاتی در حوزه علوم اسلامی، و با توجه به تعدد و پراکندگی مراکز فعال در این عرصه و منابع متعدد و صعب الوصول، و با نگاهی صرفا علمی و به دور از تعصبات و جریانات اجتماعی، سیاسی، قومی و فردی، بر مبنای اجرای طرحی در قالب « مدیریت آثار تولید شده و انتشار یافته از سوی تمامی مراکز شیعه» تلاش می نماید تا مجموعه ای غنی و سرشار از کتب و مقالات پژوهشی برای متخصصین، و مطالب و مباحثی راهگشا برای فرهیختگان و عموم طبقات مردمی به زبان های مختلف و با فرمت های گوناگون تولید و در فضای مجازی به صورت رایگان در اختیار علاقمندان قرار دهد.

اهداف:

۱.بسط فرهنگ و معارف ناب ثقلین (کتاب الله و اهل البیت علیهم السلام)

۲.تقویت انگیزه عامه مردم بخصوص جوانان نسبت به بررسی دقیق تر مسائل دینی

۳.جایگزین کردن محتوای سودمند به جای مطالب بی محتوا در تلفن های همراه ، تبلت ها، رایانه ها و ...

۴.سرویس دهی به محققین طلاب و دانشجو

۵.گسترش فرهنگ عمومی مطالعه

۶.زمینه سازی جهت تشویق انتشارات و مؤلفین برای دیجیتالی نمودن آثار خود.

سیاست ها:

۱.عمل بر مبنای مجوز های قانونی

۲.ارتباط با مراکز هم سو

۳.پرهیز از موازی کاری

۴.صرفا ارائه محتوای علمی

۵.ذکر منابع نشر

بدیهی است مسئولیت تمامی آثار به عهده ی نویسنده ی آن می باشد .

فعالیت های موسسه :

۱.چاپ و نشر کتاب، جزوه و ماهنامه

۲.برگزاری مسابقات کتابخوانی

۳.تولید نمایشگاه های مجازی: سه بعدی، پانوراما در اماکن مذهبی، گردشگری و...

۴.تولید انیمیشن، بازی های رایانه ای و ...

۵.ایجاد سایت اینترنتی قائمیه به آدرس: www.ghaemiyeh.com

۶.تولید محصولات نمایشی، سخنرانی و...

۷.راه اندازی و پشتیبانی علمی سامانه پاسخ گویی به سوالات شرعی، اخلاقی و اعتقادی

۸.طراحی سیستم های حسابداری، رسانه ساز، موبایل ساز، سامانه خودکار و دستی بلوتوث، وب کیوسک، SMS و...

۹.برگزاری دوره های آموزشی ویژه عموم (مجازی)

۱۰.برگزاری دوره های تربیت مربی (مجازی)

۱۱. تولید هزاران نرم افزار تحقیقاتی قابل اجرا در انواع رایانه، تبلت، تلفن همراه و... در ۸ فرمت جهانی:

۱.JAVA

۲.ANDROID

۳.EPUB

۴.CHM

۵.PDF

۶.HTML

۷.CHM

۸.GHB

و ۴ عدد مارکت با نام بازار کتاب قائمیه نسخه :

۱.ANDROID

۲.IOS

۳.WINDOWS PHONE

۴.WINDOWS

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